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INTERVIEW WITH 'SOVIETICUS'

What's Really Happening In Russia?

STEPHEN F. COHEN

America still sees through a lens ideologically. (Page 259)

EDITORIAL

TYSON TAKES THE COUNT

In the wake of the St. John's and William Kennedy Smith rape trials, it has become little short of astonishing that a man might be convicted of acquaintance rape—even a man like Mike Tyson, who has a history of violence against women (not to mention men, trees, cars and furniture) so widely known that his lawyer argued that to date him was to consent to sex. In Las Vegas the odds—yes, you can bet on rape trials now—were five to one in favor of acquittal. *The New York Times* trivialized the case by reporting it on the sports pages.

No doubt Tyson's supporters will try to frame the verdict as racist—another "high-tech lynching" of a proud black man. It won't wash. The real victim here is the victim, also black, a naïve, star-struck and incredibly brave teenager who, in addition to rape, underwent hours of ritual humiliation on the witness stand. It was she who risked assassination by stereotype—in this case, the stereotype of black women as gold-digging Jezebels.

No, the real question we should be asking about Mike Tyson is why he was regarded as a hero—much less as a role model for ghetto youth—in the first place. The answer has something to do with our worship of celebrity and something to do with our tolerance and even approval of brutality to women. From *Vogue*, which published a fawning profile of Tyson after his wife accused him of beating her, to beauty-contest organizers who invited him to grope the girls for publicity shots, the message was the same: Sexual violence is sexy.

It should never have taken a teenage girl to remind us that it is merely violent.

RUSSIAN NUKES FOR SALE
KARL GROSSMAN
JUDITH LONG

TOXIC BANKING
DOUG HENWOOD

EYEWITNESS IN TBILISI
KEN GLUCK

CLEAR IT WITH SIDNEY
SUSAN A. GLENN

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LETTERS.

N.E.C.L.C. & C.O.s

New York City

Bruce Shapiro, in his article on Gulf War conscientious objectors, "The High Price of Conscience" [Jan. 20], asks, "Where are all the civil libertarians?" I can speak only on behalf of myself and the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee (N.E.C.L.C.); we are, and have been, on the front lines representing, pro bono, hundreds of soldiers seeking advice and serving as counsel for many of the resisters named in the article.

As one of only three attorneys representing approximately twenty resisters held at Camp Lejeune, both in the hearings on their C.O. applications and in their criminal trials, I spent eight months working solely on their behalf; my time was donated by the N.E.C.L.C. Other attorneys, also acting for the N.E.C.L.C., fielded hundreds of telephone calls from soldiers seeking legal advice relating to their military status.

Indeed, those of us who spent most of our time on the front lines at Camp Lejeune often wondered where the press was. For example, Enrique Gonzalez, a first-year law student, activated with only two weeks left on his contract, found medically unfit for duty and recommended for discharge as a C.O. by the Marine Corps, was found guilty of desertion and missing troop movements after a mere thirty minutes of deliberation by a Marine Corps colonel. He was then sentenced to thirty months' imprisonment and given a dishonorable discharge. This outrageous conviction received virtually no press coverage. As Shapiro mentions, Amnesty International adopted Gonzalez as a prisoner of conscience and named him a worldwide prisoner of the month. However, this resulted not from some spontaneous action by the European peace movement but from a tremendous effort by the War Resisters League and Hands Off! Moreover, the clemency granted Gonzalez was the consequence of months of hard work by myself and others and not merely by virtue of Amnesty's campaign, as Shapiro intimates.

N.E.C.L.C.'s contribution to the anti–Gulf War effort was a natural consequence of its commitment to civil liberties. We were active during the Vietnam War, representing draft resisters and challenging the legality of the war. While I agree in large part with Shapiro's critique of the American left's inaction, I believe credit should be given where credit is due. Not *all* civil libertarians sat on the sidelines; some of us actually engaged in hand-to-hand political combat. *Hillary Richard*

GRANDMAS

Sacramento, Calif.

Do add to your "handful of groups" that have kept the C.O.s "at the center of their attention" an organization of which I am a member, Grandmothers for Peace. A number of us worked on behalf of California's Erik Larsen and many others. I think the war frenzy and all the tragic so-called "patriotism" that fevered the nation helped keep publicity about the peace movement's support for military resisters to a minimum. I wrote to my Congress members and others to ask their help for the C.O.s. I had *no* reply from any of the men to whom I wrote. *Margaret M. Waybur*

GREENS

Keene, N.H.

The Monadnock Greens of Keene, New Hampshire, would like to inform *Nation* readers that in December we adopted conscientious objector Paul Cook through the organization Hands Off! During the horror of the Gulf War, the courage of the conscientious objectors was a source of strength for many of us facing the blinding rhetoric of flag-waving enthusiasts. The Monadnock Greens hope to support Paul during his imprisonment at Camp Lejeune and also to educate the public on the unfair treatment of conscientious objectors. *Darcie Boyer*

SHAPIRO REPLIES

New Haven, Conn.

Not just credit but honor is due the handful of attorneys, including Hillary Richard, who defended Gulf War resisters in the military. My comments were directed not at them or at the tireless, always admirable N.E.C.L.C. but at the many prominent civil liberties advocates who remained silent and at large, well-funded organizations like the A.C.L.U., which failed to lend its legal resources and publicity apparatus to what was after all a free-speech fight.

Several community-based peace organizations like the Grandmothers for Peace and the Monadnock Greens have contacted me about their efforts on behalf of C.O.s. The passion these scattered groups brought to adopting imprisoned military resisters proves an important point: Support for C.O.s should be central to the peace movement's efforts. Support for C.O.s is not only just but gives citizen-activists concrete tasks and attainable victories—so essential to the morale of any movement, and so often elusive during the Gulf War.

Readers may be interested in developments since my article went to press. In late December, Dr. Yolanda Huet-Vaughn's sentence was reduced on military appeal to fifteen months. She is imprisoned under medium security at Leavenworth, even though by the Army's own standards she merits less restrictive confinement. In January the Marine C.O.s released last fall from Camp Lejeune filed a lawsuit (with help from the N.E.C.L.C.) challenging their commanders' right to prohibit them from speaking publicly. The court-martial of Tahan Jones has been set for late February at Camp Lejeune. *Bruce Shapiro*

METER MAN

Santa Barbara, Calif.

Richard Lingeman's classy, I know, at his biz:
At Executive Editing, he's a real whiz.
But the nature of Meter eludes him, I fear;
To the patter of *its* feet he turns a tin ear.
In his piece, "How the Bush Jump-Started Christ*mas*,"
He gets caught in his reins and falls flat on his ass.
Though he sometimes *does* find the right rhythm and rein it,
He does so by accident, so can't sustain it.
He can turn a fair rhyme—one or two really witty—
But the rest of his verse-making effort's a pity.
He owes his "apologies" not just "to Seuss,"
But to Meter itself for some flagrant misuse.

Now, a metrical poem whose meter is *bad*
Can't but make this poor reader feel mad, sad, and *had*.
And so Richard's whole purpose, with which I'd agreed—
To bash Bush's callousness, folly, and greed—
Crashes flaming to earth, flailing feebly and seething
With overwrought sarcasm, and heavy breathing.
Dr. Seuss *kept the beat*; it's as simple as that!
You can tap-dance or waltz to *The Cat in the Hat*.
The variety comes in the rest of his package—
Its language, its wildness, its plot—there's no lackage
Of stuff to have fun with, and waxing satirical
In Seuss's form can be epic and lyrical.

So, what's the conclusion this exercise shows?
Richard Lingeman ought to stick strictly to prose?
Or have his verse checked by a good meter-reader?
Whichever,
Best wishes from this special pleader,
John Ridland

LINGEMAN REPLIES

My Seussian verse I admit was mere travesty
But comes now Ridland to compound lese majesty.
To write like the Doc is surely no cinch
(Though flaws in *my* meter were caused by the Grinch).
So hail the divine Seuss, our bard nonpareil,
Beside whom all others write shaggy doggerel.
Richard Lingeman

CORRECTION

In Daniel Singer's "Coup in Algeria" [Feb. 10], 28 percent of registered voters chose the Islamic Salvation Front.

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EDITORIALS.

War Stories

The Democratic candidates this year are, to some extent, Vietnam babies. Their take on American culture, as well as their understanding of politics, was profoundly affected by the war over there and the response back home. Tom Harkin, who had been a Navy flier, turned against U.S. militarism in the Vietnam era and exposed the horrendous "tiger cages" in which South Vietnamese torture masters confined their opponents. Jerry Brown built his California gubernatorial campaigns in the 1970s, in part, on a countercultural base of young supporters activated by the antiwar movement. Bob Kerrey, of course, volunteered for Vietnam duty, was wounded and received the Medal of Honor. And Bill Clinton worked for the antiwar mobilization in Washington, demonstrated at the U.S. Embassy in London and, for two months in 1969, resisted the draft.

Clinton's method of resistance was no less devious than his fellows of the time who avoided service by feigning illness or homosexuality, using influence to get scarce slots in a local National Guard unit (cf. Quayle) or fleeing to Canada or Sweden (until Jimmy Carter granted amnesty in 1977). Whatever their reasons at the time, their draft dodging added to the rising national consciousness against the war. In Clinton's now-celebrated letter to an R.O.T.C. director, written after he had given up his no-show place in the R.O.T.C. program at the University of Arkansas Law School, the 23-year-old

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Rhodes scholar pleaded for understanding of his ambivalence. He still "despised" the war and militarism, but "I decided to accept the draft in spite of my beliefs for one reason: to maintain my political viability within the system."

Clinton goes on . . . and on . . . and on to express his powerful moral outrage at the war, which he still thinks "killed a lot of people for no good end." But at the end of the day, he made a political rather than a moral decision. What's killing a bunch of Vietnamese got to do with a career in politics? It was his viability versus theirs.

In the last days of the New Hampshire primary campaign, Bob Kerrey flashed a new ad on television, proclaiming his patriotism, as an implicit reproach to Clinton's draft resistance. Kerrey is a certified (by Congress) hero. But wars have too many heroes. The antiwar movement of the 1960s needs heroes and monuments too, as reminders of moral moments in a corrupt history and as celebrations of conscience, a valuable asset in short supply. Twenty years ago, Clinton could have been a hero of either kind. Now he is not even viable.

Nukes for Sale

"The time has come to consider creating a global system for protection of the world community," Boris Yeltsin said on January 31, addressing President Bush and the United Nations Security Council. "It could be based on a reorientation of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative to make use of high technologies developed in Russia's defense complex." Yeltsin's proposal is a hot deal for the former enemies: Russia gets cash, the United States, nuclear technology—and power through the militarization of space. The losers are the planet and its peoples.

A deal to buy Russia's Topaz 2 space reactor was struck more than a year ago and announced in January 1991 at the eighth annual Symposium on Space Nuclear Power Systems in New Mexico. Nikolai Ponomarev-Stepnoi, first deputy of the Kurtchatovis Institute of Atomic Power in Moscow, explained at the time, "Our institution got its budget cut 50 percent and . . . we need to look for finances from different sources." As for the cost to the United States, Richard Verga, director of key technologies for the Pentagon's Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, said that Topaz 2 would be used in a program with an overall cost of $100 million. The Topaz, a reactor that produces energy through nuclear fission as it orbits the Earth, uses a "thermionic" design—technology in which Russia outstrips the United States. It could be mass-produced here to provide power to weaponry on Star Wars battle platforms.

The Topaz 2 deal poses stiff competition to General Electric, which is developing a Star Wars nuclear reactor of its own, the SP-100, and is causing a split among U.S. policymakers. In a January 6 memo the White House Office of Management and Budget ordered the Energy Department and NASA to give preference to the Topaz 2 because "the potential availability of the Topaz 2 . . . offers new possibilities," and it cut D.O.E.'s SP-100 budget for 1993 from $40 million to $30 million. The Pentagon also favors the Topaz, claiming it can be deployed in three years at a tenth the cost of the SP-100, which has a price tag of $1.6 billion and can't be tested until 2004. But D.O.E., longtime friend to G.E., insists SP-100's liquid metal heat system is "ahead of thermionics."

This past January the Russians were back with more deals—and some veiled threats of selling to Libya—at the ninth annual Symposium on Space Nuclear Power Systems. This time they were peddling their nuclear-powered rockets. Coincidentally, the Pentagon had just disclosed some of its own plans for nuclear-powered rockets. Scrubbed in 1972 after seventeen years of development as too dangerous and too costly (at $1.5 billion already spent—$6.5 billion in today's dollars), the project was covertly reopened for Star Wars in 1987, code-named Timberwind and kept in deep secrecy. Nuclear-powered rockets, with a stronger blast force than conventional ones, would theoretically be able to loft the massive lasers, particle-beam devices and other heavy Star Wars weaponry into orbit. Air Force spokesmen admitted to a cost of $800 million for the project. The designer and manufacturer of the U.S. nuclear-powered rocket engine is Babcock and Wilcox, of Three Mile Island fame.

Lost in the scramble for dollars and technology is careful consideration of what the nuclearization of space can cost the planet—in dollars and in lives. In dollars: The Star Wars budget jumped from $2.9 billion in 1991 to $4.1 billion this year. The White House is calling for a record 1993 Star Wars budget of $5.4 billion.

In danger: There has been a 15 percent failure rate in both U.S. and Soviet nuclear space hardware. The most serious U.S. accident occurred in 1964, when a plutonium-powered satellite fell toward Earth, breaking up in the atmosphere and showering plutonium over vast areas of the planet. Russian nuclear-powered satellites have also fallen to Earth. The 1978 crash of Cosmos 954 covered a broad swath of Canada with radioactive debris. Topaz or SP-100, Timberwind or Russian rocketry, they're Chernobyls in the sky.

Government documents on Timberwind told of a prototype of the nuclear rocket failing on the ground. Still, the Pentagon planned a test flight, which for "safety" reasons would take place mostly over water around Antarctica, though New Zealand is on its path. A government analysis put the chances of the nuclear rocket crashing into New Zealand at 1 in 2,325. (For some perspective on these odds, recall that the chances of a Challenger-type disaster were estimated at 1 in 100,000.) The Topaz 2 has been used in only two missions, in 1987. Both ended because of a malfunction in the reactor.

This past July, insuring against accidents with U.S. nuclear space machinery, NASA and D.O.E. signed a Space Nuclear Power Agreement limiting U.S. liability in the event of a nuclear accident in space to $7.3 billion to Americans for property damage or death from radioactive contamination and $100 million, total, for citizens of all other nations. Five months earlier, the United States withdrew support for U.N. draft guidelines on the use of nuclear space devices because the Defense Department and NASA feared that Star Wars

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might be hindered by such a treaty. It's the nuke world order.

KARL GROSSMAN AND JUDITH LONG

Karl Grossman, a journalism professor at SUNY, Old Westbury, is the author of Coverup: What You Are *Not* Supposed to Know About Nuclear Power *(Permanent Press). Judith Long has been a* Nation *copy editor for eleven years.*

Toxic Banking

"I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that." The publication of these words, from a leaked internal memo, caused a rush of bad publicity for their author, World Bank chief economist Lawrence Summers, who now claims he was being ironic and provocative. There were calls for his resignation. But Summers was expressing honestly the logic of his discipline and his employer.

Summers—whose salary is 225 times the per-person income of the bank's Third World clientele—is a whiz-bang Harvard econocrat, a class that believes religiously that money is the final measure of value. Happiness is a growing G.D.P. Legal issues can be resolved as competing economic claims, and ethical decisions can be translated into dollar terms, with the cheaper alternative always preferable.

In his memo, which criticized a draft of the bank's *World Development Report*, Summers was applying cost-benefit analysis, which measures the value of a human life by the stream of wages remaining to it. Say it will cost Global Megatoxics $1 million to install a state-of-the-art scrubber in its chimney. If Global determines that not spending this sum will shorten the lives of five people by ten years apiece, all that would be lost would be the present value of these fifty years of wages. At a wage of $1,000 a year, the cost of the five lives can be figured at $41,000, thanks to the magic of compound interest; at $30,000 a year, they're worth $1.2 million. As Summers said in his memo, "health-impairing pollution should be done in the country with the lowest cost, which will be the country with the lowest wages."

Since the costs of pollution—always priced in dollars or their equivalent—rise with development, Summers argued, it makes sense costwise to dump in Africa. If a pollutant is going to cause "prostrate" [*sic*] cancer, a disease of old age, why not locate it in countries where people aren't likely to live long enough to get it? He concluded this section by saying that disagreement with this logic suggests the belief that things like "intrinsic rights to certain goods, moral reasons, social concerns, lack of adequate markets, etc. could be turned around and used more or less effectively against every Bank proposal for liberalization." Exactly; as they should be.

It makes no sense for Summers to resign; he expressed the bank's logic perfectly. It's a bank, and acts like one. It may preside over a steady erosion of Third World incomes relative to First World ones, but it makes big money. Last year, after paying $7 billion in interest and fees to its investors and bankers, it had a $1.2 billion surplus and a rate of return that commercial banks would envy.

What's a public institution to do with that kind of surplus? The bank's executive board spends a lot of time working that question over. In 1991 it decided to contribute $267 million to its soft-loan affiliate, which lends to very poor countries at concessional rates, $29 million to the Global Environment Trust Fund and stuff the remaining $904 million into its hoard of "retained earnings," which now stands at $11.9 billion. According to Unicef, preventing vitamin-A-deficiency blindness would cost $6 million. Preventing "the great majority" of childhood malnutrition deaths would cost $2.5 billion. But adding to the World Bank's surplus is a higher priority.

In recent years, the bank has moved away from project-oriented lending—power plants and dams—and toward structural adjustment lending, in which credit is conditional on adoption of a standard austerity/deregulation package. Not surprisingly, these schemes have savage effects, to which the bank has a ready answer—more loans. The bank is lending its clients more money to treat the poverty, social dislocation and environmental damage that earlier loans helped create. The bank funds greenhouse-gas reduction schemes in countries where the greenhouse-gas producers were initially financed by the World Bank.

Bank publicity makes much of a new environmental consciousness, but actions tell a different story. The bank exempted structural adjustment programs from environmental review even though their point is to work human and physical resources harder, which can't be friendly to people or their environment. It has redlined its environment department, leaving it little power. World Bank claims to a larger role in global environmental politics—to be pressed, for example, at this spring's United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development—should be beaten back with heavy sticks.

Whether or not Summers returns to Harvard, waste export will be a growth industry for these sluggish times. The practice of shifting dirty industries to poor countries is well established. Greenpeace follows the routine stuff all over the world—German (per capita income: $20,440) plastic to Argentina ($2,160), U.S. ($20,910) mercury to South Africa ($2,470), car batteries from everywhere to Brazil ($2,540). Plastic dropped into recycling bins is likely to be shipped to Malaysia ($2,160). The logic is impeccable.

DOUG HENWOOD

★

Texas Remake For The Campaign

He puts aside his Mister Rogers voice,
And tries to ape the other Rogers (Kenny).
He drops his g's, and talks of "bidness," folks—
Except right now, alas, there isn't any.

Calvin Trillin

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Bertie Wooster's Aunt Dahlia once warned him sternly against having anything at all to do with girls who spelled ordinary names in extraordinary ways: "No good can come of association with anything labelled Gwladys or Ysobel or Ethyl or Mabelle or Kathryn, but particularly Gwladys." Presuming this to extend to any Gennifers of the species, it seems that a failure to profit by Aunt Dahlia's counsel is the harshest verdict we are allowed to pass on Governor Clinton's ethical "judgment." All right, so these are lax times. That is why the name Gennifer Flowers is notorious and the name Rickey Ray Rector—surely just as euphonious—is not.

When Dostoyevsky wrote about the horrific torture of telling a man the date of his own death, and then keeping him waiting, he said that a man would endure any privation to escape that trap. This wouldn't be applicable in Rickey Ray Rector's case, since he was lobotomized as a result of a self-inflicted bullet wound. So I suppose it could be said that Governor Clinton was sparing him some of the agonies of the condemned when he refused to grant executive clemency and had him destroyed by lethal injection on January 24. This was the big *60 Minutes* weekend for the Governor, and you can well imagine that the last thing he felt he needed was idle talk about his softness on crime.

One is tempted to be pontifical about this moral contrast—a temptress on one side and an execution on the other, and the mob turning from the medicalized gibbet to the exposed love nest—but actually the Rector case tells us nothing that we do not already know only too well. The lessons are that capital punishment is cruel and unusual, that especially in the South it is applied in a racist manner, that humane and defensible alternatives to it are within easy reach, and that Bill Clinton is a calculating opportunist.

The first point is easily established. As well as degrading the medical profession in a more intimate way than the use of gassing, hanging, shooting and electrocution, "lethal injection" is just as barbarous as the sub-modern methods. As the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit was constrained to observe in 1983: "There is substantial and uncontroverted evidence . . . that execution by lethal injection poses a serious risk of cruel, protracted death. . . . Even a slight error in dosage or administration can leave a prisoner conscious but paralyzed while dying, a sentient witness to his or her own asphyxiation."

Point number two is as old as America, and older than Europe. It's well put by Clinton Duffy (another good name, by the way), who as a San Quentin warden was witness to more than 150 snuffings. Capital punishment, he said, is "a privilege of the poor." Is there any thinking person who does not know what this means in a state like Arkansas? The latest and the driest phrasing of the problem comes from the General Accounting Office, reporting to the Senate and House judiciary committees this very month:

> Our synthesis of the 28 studies shows a pattern of evidence indicating racial disparities in the charging, sentencing and imposition of the death penalty. . . . In 82 percent of the studies, race of victim was found to influence the likelihood of being charged with capital murder or receiving the death penalty, i.e., those who murdered whites were found to be more likely to be sentenced to death than those who murdered blacks. This finding was remarkably consistent across data sets, states, data collection methods and analytic techniques.

As for point three, it's pretty clear that Rickey Ray Rector met all the customary pragmatic objections to clemency. He had blown half his brain away after committing murder (I take it he was guilty, though miscarriages have been known), and he wasn't going anywhere. He was, by most standards, unfit to plead. He was, in any case, condemned by definition to confinement without parole. In short, by all the usual limiting cases his sentence would have been commuted. And in no other "civilized" country, such as for example any member of the Council of Europe, could he have been condemned to death in the first place.

In discussion with partisans of Governor Clinton's decision to license the lethal injection, I have found myself more powerfully nauseated than in past arguments with rednecks and racists who really don't know any better. The strategic and tactical thinking displayed by his supporters—I asked Clinton himself, but he refused to favor me with a reply—convicts him of a base, hungry cunning. The last two executions he authorized, of John Swindler in June 1990 and Ronald Gene Simmons later in the same month, were both of white men. Thus, it is argued, by staying the execution of Rickey Ray Rector, Clinton would have opened himself to the charge of affirmative action. I cannot offhand think of a more contemptible reasoning. The mentally devastated Rector had to die because two men of a different shade had already been put to death? In other words, never act justly now, for fear you may have to act justly later. After all, justice can set that frightful thing—a precedent.

It's also impossible to acquit Clinton of the charge of having people snuffed to suit his own political and career needs. In a candidates' debate on January 19, the Governor bragged of his firmness in dispatching Swindler and Simmons, as if to pre-empt any Hortonizing of his future ambitions. And when he briefly lost the Arkansas Statehouse to a neolithic Republican named Frank White in 1980, Clinton was considered "vulnerable" to White's demagogic charge that he was weak on law and order. The element of low calculation in the Rector decision is so evident and so naked that it makes one gasp.

So what is all this garbage about "the new paradigm" of Clinton's forthright Southern petit-bourgeois thrusting innovative fearless blah blah blah? In a test of principle where even the polls have shown that people do not demand the death penalty, he opted to maintain the foulest traditions and for the meanest purposes. As the pundits keep saying, he is a man to watch.

In his memoir, *Right From the Beginning*, Pat Buchanan says that his heroes are Franco, Joe McCarthy and Cardinal Spellman. Where in this hierarchy does he place Roy Cohn?

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ARTICLES.

INTERVIEW WITH 'SOVIETICUS'

What's Really Happening in Russia?

STEPHEN F. COHEN

Recently returned from Russia, Stephen F. Cohen responded to a series of questions from Nation *editors on developments there. A transcript of his replies follows. —The Editors*

Q: *The longstanding discrepancy between American media perceptions and Soviet realities was a constant concern in your* Nation *column in the 1980s ["Sovieticus"]. Given all the changes in the Soviet Union, and the end of Russian censorship, is there no longer a discrepancy?*

SFC: We have a thousandfold more information about Soviet, and particularly Russian, affairs than we had before Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, and American reporting from the scene is far better—less simplistic and more detailed. But new stereotypes, myths and misconceptions have emerged in our mass media—especially in what passes for commentary—and in our political discourse. And though they are the opposite of cold war misperceptions, they too obscure much more than they reveal. Indeed, I worry that it may become just as difficult to have an informed, dispassionate discussion of Russia in the United States today as it was during the cold war years.

The basic problem, as always, is the American habit of interpreting Russia through the prism of our own ideology—of finding there only what we seek, and seeking only what we find comforting. For decades, it was an alien "Communism" and "totalitarianism." Now it's an American-style "free-market democracy" and "civil society." Many commentators, and some correspondents, are functioning less as journalists than as cheerleaders for "free-market" capitalism, which they can't distinguish from corrupt black-marketeering. Some base their accounts on self-described Moscow democrats, who aren't always objective sources and whose radical views may be no less self-destructive than those of Russia's pre-Soviet intelligentsia. Even eminent professors have entered the fray. A Berkeley historian tells us in *The New Republic* that we shouldn't hold Boris Yeltsin to high democratic standards, because of the good things he is trying to achieve. Yeltsin deserves our support, but didn't American apologists for the Bolsheviks, and even for Stalin, offer the same excuses?

Each of us has the right to hope that Russia will become what we think it should be. But the ideological perspectives of the American right and left can't make analytical sense of that country's defiantly complex history and politics. As always, they only distort our political discourse and policies toward Russia.

Q: *You speak of new myths about Russia. Give us an example.*

SFC: Myths may not be entirely false. Usually, they inflate a partial truth into an overwhelming one that obscures other truths. Take, for example, the current notion that a "civil society," eager for a democratic market system, has emerged as the driving force in Russian political life, even defeating the coup last August. For many observers of Russia who consider themselves to be right-minded—scholars, journalists and democratic activists alike—this has become a new orthodoxy. Everything used to be attributed to a "totalitarian Kremlin." Now we have another extreme of simplistic analysis.

"Civil society" isn't even a very meaningful or useful concept in this context. Borrowed from the history of Western democratic theory, it's another attempt to squeeze Russia's traditions and realities into our ideological constructs. Indeed, the idea of a civil society is more philosophical than sociological because it is assumed to be democratic by nature. If so, how to explain Nazi Germany, which had some kind of civil society? Nor is it a valid empirical generalization about Russia's 150 million people. Opinion polls tell us that a great many of them don't understand or don't want markets or democracy. Some Russian sociologists worry that much of their country is more akin to a "*lumpen* society," the opposite of civil society. Anyway, to explain everything in terms of a surging civil society is bad analysis and history. Several hundred thousand Russians may have actively opposed the coup; the rest were passive or silent.

Myths popularized by the failed coup, which remains a mystery in important respects, would matter less if they did not focus on partial truths. A struggle for markets and democracy is part of the Russian political story today, though that saga began under Gorbachev, not under Yeltsin after the coup. But consider two other large developments.

In most of the former Soviet republics, notably in Russia itself, leaders are calling for radical political and economic reform in the name of society. Even leaving aside how much of this may be designed to win American support, most of these leaders were Communist Party functionaries in the Soviet system—members of Soviet elites that fragmented during the Gorbachev years—now engaged in a zealous struggle over vast property and power formerly controlled by the Soviet state: factories, banks, land, shops, television networks, publishing houses, apartments, transportation and, of course, military property. Like yesterday's Marxists, today's anti-Communists understand that property is power, so the struggle is raging everywhere, from the capitals to the provinces. Some of these people, perhaps many of them, are sincere converts to marketization and democratization. But it is foolish to ignore the politics of confiscation unfolding since late 1991 and its dangerous echoes of politically motivated expropria-

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tions earlier in Soviet history. It helps to explain the revival of some authoritarian traditions around governments in the former republics professing to be democratic, including Yeltsin's.

The second development is related. Our attention is riveted on Yeltsin's government in Moscow. But in Russia and several other republics, considerable real power has migrated from the capital to the provinces. The process began under Gorbachev as central political authority weakened and elections made provincial officials more dependent on local constituencies. But it's now being driven and intensified by the economic situation. The scarcity of goods and the breakdown of distribution have put enormous power in the hands of producers. That means the country's large state factories and farms are still run by the old elites or *nomenklatura* and are located mainly in the provinces. Neither Yeltsin nor any other Moscow leader can govern, much less reform, Russia today without at least the tacit support of these powerful provincial elites. Real power—to produce and deliver goods—is in their hands. They could, for example, starve the large cities, the bastions of whatever democracy now exists, while bartering among themselves. Many of these economic elites want to take more direct control of their enterprises by "privatizing" them, but is that real marketization? Most of them now profess to be anti-Communists, but does that make them democrats? And what about their close ties to provincial military commanders? Whatever the case, while our diplomats and journalists seek Russia's destiny in Moscow, it is being determined largely in the vast and remote provinces.

Q: *For someone who always argued that fundamental change was possible in the Soviet system, you don't seem to be impressed by the dramatic changes that have occurred.*

SFC: Despite prevailing scholarly and media views to the contrary in the 1970s and early 1980s, it was easy to understand that significant changes would eventually come in the Soviet system. Nothing in history or politics is immutable, and factors favoring reform were already observable. It is much harder today to be certain about what has actually changed irrevocably and what has not, and to weigh what has passed against what remains. Take, for example, the prevailing conclusion, which has become so axiomatic that hardly anyone disputes it: "The Soviet system has collapsed."

Certainly, this is so in important ways, but also not so in important ways. It's a mistake to equate the Soviet system over the years so completely with the Communist Party—or Communism with what we might call "sovietism." The party was a very important part of it, but far from all of it. For example, the party controlled the state, but the state—the "administrative-command system," as it became known—primarily controlled society, at least the economy. So what happened? The Communist Party actually lost its monopoly on politics as early as 1989—in that fundamental respect, the Leninist system was already disintegrating as a result of Gorbachev's reforms—but the state administration continued to function. After the 1991 coup attempt, the party collapsed, but has the Soviet state system? We shouldn't be misled by surface changes, however dramatic. Many links in the system have been ruptured, especially between Russia and the republics and in economic distribution. The names of lots of cities, institutions and streets have been changed.

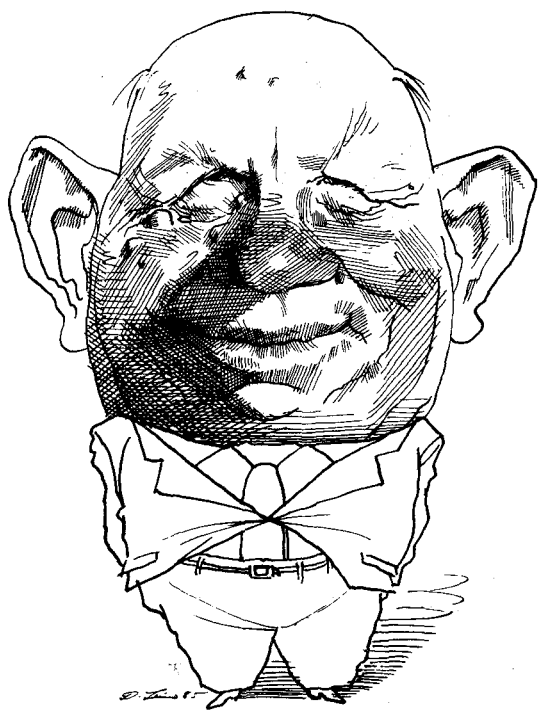
But consider some fundamental continuities in Russia itself. The economy—at least 95 percent of it—remains in the hands

Hair Line

DAVID LEVINE

Lenin bald . . .

Stalin hairy . . .



Khrushchev bald . . .

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of the state. No new elites, as I said before, have emerged. At the regional and local levels, the old authorities are largely still in place, having fled from the party to other power structures. And class relations are as they were. A new class of entrepreneurs is emerging, but it remains tiny and weak. Many popular attitudes do not seem to have changed greatly. Most citizens still expect the kind of cradle-to-grave welfare state that was a defining component of latter-day Soviet Communism.

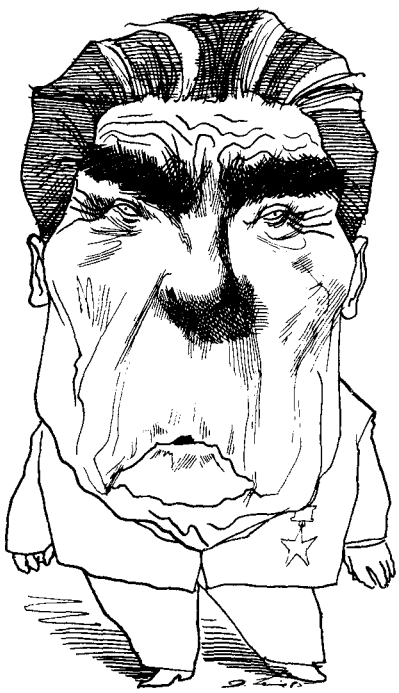
In all these fundamental respects, no new revolution has occurred in Russia, although it is fashionable to speak of one. And if we ask more correctly about the prospects of further reforms in the system, the towering question that faced and undermined Gorbachev also remains: How do you actually implement marketization and democratization in a system where large segments of local officialdom—which evolved over decades into an entrenched caste of political, economic and military power-holders—and of the populace are opposed? It can be done, I think, but not easily or quickly.

There's an even larger interpretive question here. Was Communism or sovietism really something entirely alien to and imposed upon Russia, as many Western and Russian commentators now insist? If so, we could imagine a quick escape from the past. We could believe Yeltsin when he tells us he is president of "another country." But if to a significant degree Soviet Communism grew out of and perpetuated Russia's authoritarian traditions, as I think was the case, we need a different perspective. Despite the modernizing and Westernizing changes that have occurred over the years, Russia cannot jump out of its skin—certainly not into ours.

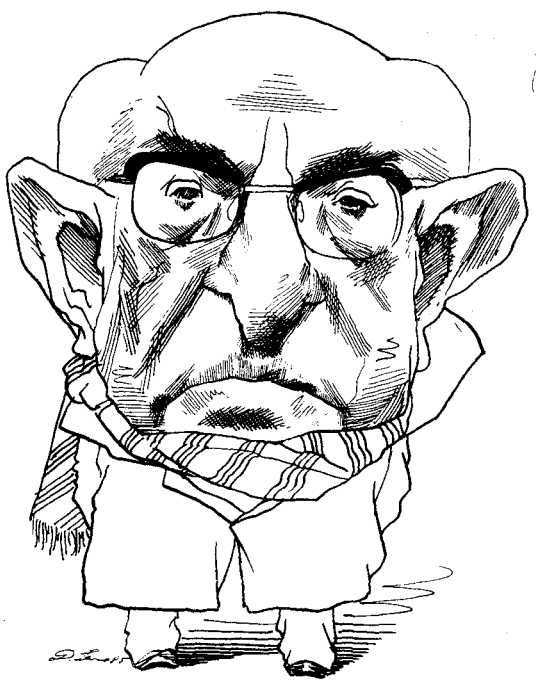
I even have some doubts about another prevailing certainty in the media—that we've seen the last of something like the Soviet Union. The union has collapsed politically. All fifteen former republics say they are fully independent states. Some have gained diplomatic recognition and some are moving toward separate militaries and currencies. But here too we have to think about continuities and factors that may favor some kind of new union of several or most of the former republics.

Think of these pro-union factors as grids that stretch across and bind the entire territory. There is, of course, a single energy and economic grid. Few essential industrial enterprises can produce without components made in other republics. There is a single military grid. For all the rival claims to military property, the Soviet Army is still garrisoned in most of the republics and largely under Moscow's command. And there is a human grid—75 million former Soviet citizens who live outside their ethnic territories, including 25 million Russians; millions of ethnic intermarriages; millions of non-Russians who speak only Russian and Russians who live elsewhere but can't speak the native language. Not surprisingly, in a referendum only last March, 77 percent voted for preserving the Soviet Union.

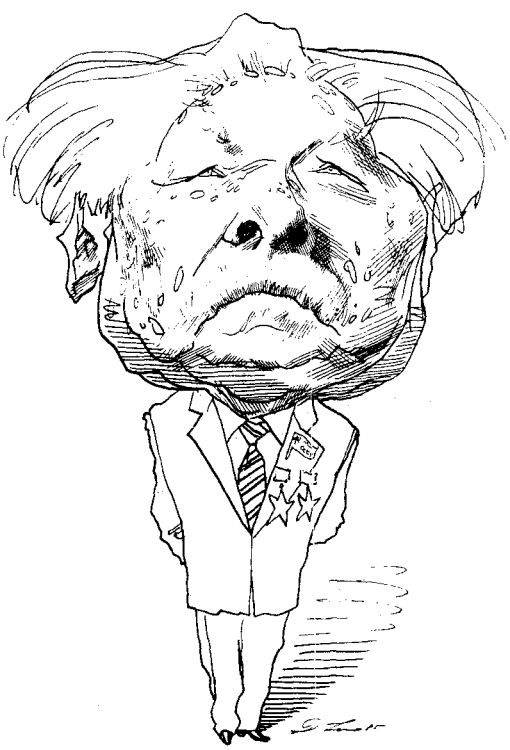
These ties that bind now seem less important than nationalist politics in the newly proclaimed states, but here we have to think further. Most nationalist leaders are ex-Communists engaged in political struggles at home. If their conversion to nationalism is less than sincere or complete, how long and fully will they play the nationalist card on territorial space that has been dominated by Russia's size and power for centuries? Meanwhile, Yeltsin insists that the imperial "center" ended with the Soviet government. But Russia, or Moscow, was the center of the Soviet Union. And though Yeltsin has renamed those Soviet ministries "Russian," they still exist. Some are



Brezhnev hairy . . .



Andropov bald . . .



Chernenko hairy . . .

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being reduced, but others are being consolidated, including the security ministries. Moreover, Russian nationalism, the strongest ideological force in Moscow today, won't disregard its 25 million compatriots living elsewhere, or easily concede the Soviet Union's former economic and military property, as we see in the dispute over armed forces in Ukraine.

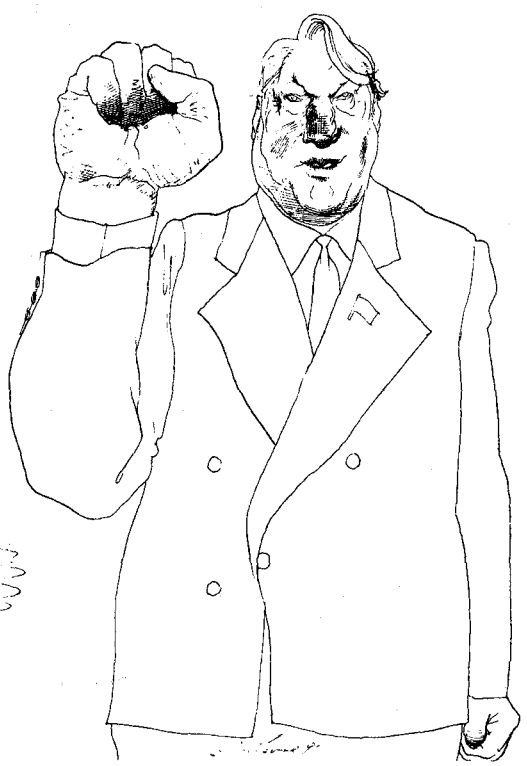
I'm not predicting a new Soviet Union, only arguing that here too there are more good questions than answers. One is whether Gorbachev was right in insisting that marketization and democratization stood a better chance in a reformed Soviet Union rather than without a union.

Q: *So you don't put much credence in the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was created in December by abolishing the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's government?*
SFC: We should wish it well, because it's a fine idea. But it's a paper idea unlikely to withstand all the factors I've already mentioned, from the struggle over property to the enduring union grids. In fact, republic leaders who joined the commonwealth had conflicting reasons for doing so. Some hoped it would become a reformed union along the lines proposed by Gorbachev, others a way station to total independence. Not surprisingly, there's been more conflict than consensus ever since the documents were signed. Moreover, it's not possible to create a new state or commonwealth overnight, just by declaring it. Even the best such political intentions require decades, and not all the intentions leading to the commonwealth were of the highest political order. Much of the process was based on a chain of political betrayal. Gorbachev's own ministers—by the way, they were chiefly men of the state, not the party—betrayed him by staging a coup. Gorbachev returned to Moscow and reached a series of political arrangements with Yeltsin, who then betrayed him and all the leaders of the non-Slav republics by going to Belarus with the Ukrainian leader Leonid Kravchuk. Kravchuk then betrayed Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament by reneging on several military and financial agreements. And so it goes. How much that is good or durable can be built on the politics of betrayal?

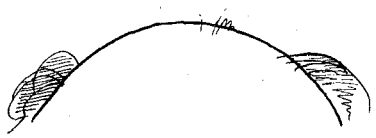
Q: *Most of the changes we now see are results of Gorbachev's almost seven years in power. As one of the few American scholars who argued from the beginning that he was an authentic reformer, can you now evaluate his years as a leader?*
SFC: It's not a simple matter. Political obituaries published since Gorbachev left office differ greatly. Western commentators tend to agree, and rightly, that his role in international affairs has earned him a great and positive place in history. More than anyone else, he deserves credit for ending the cold war, liberating Eastern Europe, reuniting Germany and ending Russia's long isolation from the West. On the other hand, many people, particularly in Russia, insist that no leader who presided over the disintegration of his own country, the crisis of its economy and the collapse of his own party can be called successful. Others try to strike a balance: Gorbachev brought freedom but eliminated sausage.

So, many complex factors and outcomes have to be taken into account. A full scholarly evaluation of Gorbachev's leadership won't be possible for many years, for several reasons. First, Sovietologists who denied for decades that change was possible in the system now lack useful concepts for even defining the success or failure of such reforms. Second, Gorbachev attempted something unprecedented in history: simultaneous

Gorbachev bald . . .



Yeltsin hairy . . .



From this truly Marxian observation one can predict the appearance of the next Russian leader.

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transformations to democracy, a market economy and real federalism. Comparisons with lesser reforms in other societies are therefore partial or seriously misleading. Third, we still do not know how much freedom of decision making Gorbachev had during his years in power, and thus how many unwise decisions were actually of his own making. For this, we need memoirs and archives. Fourth, it's not impossible that Gorbachev will have some kind of political afterlife that will alter our judgment.

But mainly, much depends on how the great transformations he set into motion turn out in the years and decades ahead. If Russia becomes a predominantly democratic state with a flourishing market economy, coexisting benignly with the former Soviet republics, historians may conclude that Gorbachev was the twentieth century's greatest leader, having launched the transformation of its largest country. But if Russia plunges into a new despotism, with a rapacious state economy and imperialism, he's more likely to be viewed as another tragic leader in Russia's long history of failed reform.

Q: *Fair enough. But surely you can make a tentative evaluation today.*

SFC: On an interim basis, I would rank Gorbachev among this century's greatest reformers and as the greatest reformer in Russian history. Setting himself against centuries of Russian and Soviet experience, he consciously set out to liberate his society from the state's political and economic domination, and he succeeded far beyond what anyone could have imagined. Incidentally, many of the people who today criticize Gorbachev's domestic reforms as inadequate are those who previously said he would change nothing. Moreover, along the way, Gorbachev led Russia closer to a real democratic process than it had ever had before. He persuaded even the country's conservative elites of the need for substantial marketization and privatization. And the dogma of a monopolistic state economy was only one of the orthodoxies he shattered, a feat that bequeathed political capital to new reformers for years to come. Still more, unlike any previous czarist or Soviet leader, Gorbachev offered to negotiate Russia's empire with its constituent nations. And in doing all this, he caused remarkably little bloodshed, which is a great tribute to his belief that radical purposes had to rely on centrist tactics and consensual approaches. Finally, Gorbachev achieved all this despite far greater opposition than is generally known. Pop analysts fault him for not moving more quickly and taking even bolder steps. But leaders must be judged in light of the obstacles they face. And there is plenty of evidence that Gorbachev's reforms—from overhauling the political and economic system to negotiating with the United States and withdrawing from Afghanistan—were actively opposed, even sabotaged, by political forces at high levels in the party and the state.

Q: *You credit Gorbachev with moving the Soviet Union toward democracy and suggest that Russia's future political development will strongly influence the fate of the other republics. What are the prospects for democracy in Russia?*

SFC: Democracy may still have its best chance ever in Russia, but it's a slim chance for the near future. The mythology of the failed coup generated the illusion that big obstacles to democratic development had been swept away. Some antidemocratic institutions were crushed or weakened, but many authoritarian obstacles remain, as I've already pointed out. Nor is it true that all the anti-Communists who call themselves democrats are actually democratic, as I know from firsthand observations. In addition, Russia still lacks many aspects of a functioning democracy, even leaving aside the absence of markets and a consensual democratic culture. It's a long list: a parliament and judiciary comparable to the traditions of executive power; a multiparty system; regularly scheduled elections; a nationwide and self-sustaining free press; and more. Russia doesn't even have a real constitution yet.

Yeltsin is relying on the czarist and Soviet tradition of centralizing authority.

Still worse, antidemocratic developments have grown stronger and more numerous since the failed coup. These include not just the deteriorating economic situation—scarcity, rampant inflation and unemployment have never fostered democracy—but other less noted factors. The military has been politicized in unprecedented ways. It began in 1989 when Gorbachev had to allow active officers to stand for the new Parliament. During their final showdown, both Gorbachev and Yeltsin had to plead openly for the military's support. Yeltsin won because he could make budgetary promises, though dubious ones. Since then, the military has been drawn even more deeply and clamorously into politics, as its top leaders protest the country's disintegration and the efforts in several former republics to defy their authority and seize their property. They've marched onto the political stage, as we saw in January when a large assembly of wrathful officers convened in the Kremlin. They are only a step from center stage. Wildcat acts by district commanders may be no less a threat—in the Baltics, for example, where large Russian garrisons are feeling increasingly disfranchised; in the Transcaucasus, where civil wars could incite them; or in the Russian provinces, where garrison elites are part of the military-industrial-agricultural complex. Even if traditional generals have no stomach for taking power, don't overlook colonels and captains, who are closer to the woeful economic plight of junior officers.

We ought to take notice of other antidemocratic factors as well. Before the coup, a progressive conservatism was emerging in Soviet political debates. It was discredited by the coup, unfairly I think, and the result is even greater polarization between self-professed radical democrats and militant reactionaries, who have found new adherents among disemployed Communist officials and disadvantaged workers. Add here increasingly assertive "national-patriotic" movements, one of the strongest of which is indignantly called "Ours." Russian nationalism may turn out to be liberal and democratic, but it's hard to see how, in present circumstances. It is already

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menacing the Chechens, Tatars and other large non-Russian minorities that want more independence within Russia. And a retrograde nationalism, yet another legacy of both czarism and Stalinism, is also likely to be fed by an indignant backlash against Westernization, which is becoming excessive and primitive. Have a look at all the Western advisers swarming over Russia and at the amount of imported rock videos and soft porn on government-run television.

Q: *Are you saying that Russia has not moved closer to democracy since the coup and the disintegration of the Soviet Union?*

SFC: It depends on your understanding of democracy. Russia has a popularly elected President and Parliament. That's very important. But as a process, there may be less democracy now than before. Yeltsin is ruling primarily by decree, an old Russian tradition, rather than through constitutional process or parliamentary legislation. Some of his decrees are of dubious legality. Banning a political party and confiscating property, even the Communist Party and Soviet property, doesn't set democratic precedents. More generally, there's Yeltsin's campaign to build "presidential power," which already involved postponing regional elections last December and establishing an apparatus of personal envoys to oversee provincial officials. Real Russian democratization must move toward political decentralization and representative government at all levels. Yeltsin's campaign seems to be relying on the czarist and Soviet tradition of centralizing authority in Moscow and imposing it on the rest of the country.

To be fair, a case might be made that these measures are necessary to cope with an emergency situation and to implement reforms. In fact, Yeltsin's people are saying that some of them are only temporary. But it's a mistake to pretend they are democratic; that will only distort or discredit the democratic idea in Russia. And don't forget that temporary emergency measures have a habit of becoming permanent in Russia.

On the other hand, I don't share the widely held view, which began in Moscow and spread to the American media, that the only choice now is between democracy and fascism. Both possibilities exist, but there's a large spectrum of authoritarian outcomes in between them that seem more likely. Nor do I share the widespread notion, which also originated in Moscow, that a popular upheaval from below is lurking in the wings. It's a very remote possibility exaggerated by the lingering spell of 1917. Russia is no longer the country it was in 1917. If large-scale disorders break out in the streets, some segments of the political class probably will be behind them, most likely forces associated with the security apparatus or the military-industrial complex.

Q: *Speaking of the political class, you spoke earlier of its growing polarization. Is there no consensus about the country's future?*

SFC: Russian politics has often revolved around two questions: What is to be done, and who's guilty? Part of the problem today is that because so many people don't know what to do, they demand to know who's guilty. Therein lies the danger of another political witch hunt, actually encouraged by Westerners who advise putting former Communist officials on trial in a country that had 20 million party members.

I don't think Russia can move toward a stable system, much less a democratic one, until the political class openly discusses and resolves on some consensual basis three fundamental questions. First, should everything created during the Soviet period be rejected as criminal or unworthy, and therefore everything built from scratch? Or should important aspects of the existing system be retained? Second, what kind of system is best for Russia: one that tries to imitate a Western model or one that borrows from Western experiences but is equally reliant on Russian traditions and circumstances? And third, how fast should the country move toward a new system? In a leap through "shock therapy" or gradually and incrementally? (In thinking about such questions, it's important to understand that Russia's need in the foreseeable future is not to produce an American-style excess of goods but to eliminate scarcity of those goods necessary for a comfortable life.) Gorbachev generally preached moderate answers to these questions. The danger inherent in a very radical approach, which may now be ascendant, is that it could plunge Russia into another Bolshevik-like experiment, further polarize the country and produce a system that is neither stable nor democratic.

Q: *Now that Yeltsin has launched his own economic program by liberalizing prices, which approach has he embraced?*

SFC: In economic policy, the conflict is between those who want to dismantle the state economy and build on a free market and those who want to combine large parts of the state sector with a market economy—to walk on both legs, so to speak. Yeltsin's government includes advocates of both approaches. His present economic team, headed by Yegor Gaidar, is preaching radical abolitionism and market "shock therapy," while his Vice President, Aleksandr Rutskoi, advocates policies similar to Gorbachev's. Rutskoi, a relatively young and very substantial political figure, is increasingly nationalistic and critical of the Gaidar team for practicing "economic genocide." He has been excluded from Yeltsin's inner circle but hardly from the political scene.

Yeltsin has espoused both views. Politically, he has rejected virtually the entire Soviet experience and suggested the need for a Western-style system. But economically, he is promising to retain large parts of the state and welfare system, which were the bedrock of Soviet "socialism." Having risen to power by assailing Communism, Yeltsin may now be finding that there are few social constituencies and circumstances favoring its opposite, capitalism. If so, he'll probably have to act even less democratically and make more inflationary concessions to public opinion in order to maintain stability. Eventually he may have to form a coalition with the Rutskoi forces.

It's not clear what Yeltsin really hopes to achieve by letting prices soar, as was done in Poland two years ago with very mixed results. Yeltsin says it will cause hard times but also generate many more goods and trigger extensive marketization. He says prices, and the general economic situation, will stabilize by year's end. Let's hope so. But Russia is not Poland, a small homogeneous country where private farming and a

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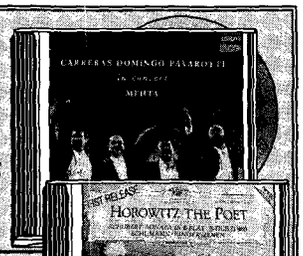

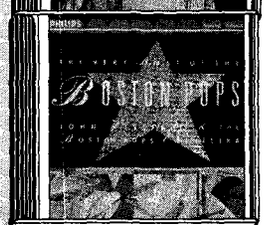

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rudimentary market infrastructure already existed. No substantial demonopolization, denationalization or privatization of Russian industry, agriculture or even trade has yet taken place. The process is scheduled to begin this year, but first and primarily in the areas of shops and housing, not the productive sectors. And no one knows if newly adopted land reform legislation will actually create a sizable number of productive private farmers.

So where is the incentive for large monopolistic producers to respond to liberalized prices (which was an administrative and not a market decision) by putting more goods in the stores? They may wait for still higher prices. Or factory managers, who as in the past must supply their work force, and collective-farm chairmen, who need industrial goods, may not care about acquiring more rubles of dubious value. They can continue to barter among themselves, leaving state shops without goods and cities without provisions. The result would be hyperinflation and a mass victimization of millions of urban citizens who depend on state stores (the elderly, the young and almost everyone who's not a secure part of the industrial-agricultural work force or black market) without real marketization or privatization. Russian economists who foresee this outcome call it "shock without therapy."

Yeltsin may also have less-publicized reasons for liberalizing prices so soon. One could be to skim off the excessive rubles in consumer hands, the "ruble overhang" that economists complain is inflationary but that represents people's life savings. Another could be to reduce the state's enormous budget deficit by sharply cutting subsidies for essential consumer goods. And yet another, to entice more foreign aid by convincing Western governments and banks that he is acting on their advice. But it is hard to imagine anything except an even deeper economic and political crisis, perhaps as early as April, if people have been deprived—some say "robbed"—of their everyday necessities, savings and possibly jobs. At worst, such policies could vaporize already weak constituencies for reform and bring reactionary forces to power in Moscow or in the provinces. At best, they would create a situation compelling Yeltsin, or another leader, to try to revive a gradual, incremental approach, if it's not too late.

Q: *What should or could the United States do about all these changes and dangers in the former Soviet Union? Has the Bush Administration adopted the right policies toward Russia?*
SFC: What policies? There are no clear ones except for desperately trying to safeguard Soviet nuclear weapons and hoping for good political outcomes in fifteen former republics. We claim to be leading an international economic assistance program, but we've given less than 7 percent of the total, mainly in credits to buy our agricultural surplus and that must be repaid, while Europeans have contributed more than 75 percent. We promised to help Russia and the others through a potentially destabilizing winter but held a midwinter conference on the problem, and none of the food aid promised in November had reached Soviet territory by early February. We are giving lots of "technical advice," but much of it is dubious. Meanwhile, we rushed to recognize the independence of several republics on the assumption that the proclaimed Commonwealth of Independent States was a divorce, when actually it was only a separation. Now they're fighting over a final settlement, and we've squandered diplomatic influence.

To be fair, these are complex questions without easy answers. The Bush Administration has good intentions, but will it act on them? After all, it never came to Gorbachev's financial aid in ways that might have prevented the coup. There may also be some bad intentions in or close to the Administration. One occasionally hears triumphalist suggestions that the United States should exploit Russia's weakness to prevent it from becoming such a great power again—by preventing Russia from regaining strong influence over the former republics, as Henry Kissinger seems to be urging, or by imposing a unilateral disarmament on it. Great powers don't disappear and great countries don't stay in crisis. If we act on these unwise and dangerous proposals, what kind of Russia will then confront us?

Post-Communist Russia must find its own, native future, or it will never be stable.

But I'm even more worried about the consensus emerging among people inside and outside the Administration, conservatives and liberals alike. It assumes that U.S. aid should be conditioned on Russia following our economic and political advice, which means replicating our system and having a large American presence in Russia: economic advisers to the government, business advisers to enterprises, political advisers to parties, guardians against black-market corruption, inspectors to gather and dismantle their weapons, and more. In short, a great crusade to convert Russia to our way of life.

Almost everything is wrong with this kind of missionary and exceedingly intrusive American policy. It presumes that a political-economic-social system can be artificially and firmly implanted in a different, much older civilization, that we can intervene wisely in a seething caldron of rival Russian ideas and movements, and that in the end Russia will be grateful. In reality, it means blatantly allying ourselves with one extreme program, "free-market shock therapy," and with the enormous social pain it will cause. And remember, political pendulums always swing. Anti-Westernism remains a powerful Russian tradition. When the natural backlash against excessive Westernization comes, hordes of Americans perceived to be engineering everyday pain, Klondike capitalism and the exploitation of the country can only make it worse and direct it against us. Similarly, the Bush Administration's plan to import Russian nuclear scientists may be a virtuous effort to prevent proliferation, but how will Russians eventually react to this Alaska-like purchase of their best and brightest?

Many well-intentioned Russians want this kind of American policy, but we lack the wisdom, power and right to intervene so directly and deeply. Post-Communist Russia must find its own, native future, or it will never be stable. Why presume there can be no good third—or fourth and fifth—way?

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The West began with markets and moved toward state regulation and welfare. Russia begins instead with a statist system. Let it resolve the duality in its own way. Where is our fabled open mind and pluralism?

Q: *Are you saying that the United States should do nothing? Have a policy of benign neglect toward Russia?*
SFC: I want a much more generous American policy of helping Russia reform, but a far less smug, conditional and intrusive one. Most Russian elites and movements now accept the need for marketization and privatization. They disagree over how much, how fast and how to do it. So long as the general direction is toward reform, under Yeltsin or other leaders, let us give generously from afar and let them decide. Plenty of Russian economists understand the problems and possibilities better than do itinerant ones from Harvard, Hoover, Heritage and world banks who know little or nothing about Russia.

The United States ought to mobilize economic assistance comparable to the Marshall Plan but, alas, that isn't going to happen. Given our own economic problems and presidential-year politics, there's no sufficient constituency or leadership, and won't be. But at a minimum, we must do several large things immediately, without any more excuses about aid going into "black holes" and black markets, for the sake of our national security and national honor.

Massive humanitarian relief has to be given, not for one winter but several, to citizens most imperiled by marketization—the very young and very old. Why are none of our vaunted elder statesmen leading a supplementary private aid mission, as Herbert Hoover did in the early 1920s? A very large, long-term, low-interest credit program is needed so Russia can import essential goods and technology. Similarly, existing debt has to be restructured and interest considerably deferred or even forgiven. If Western private capital is really a large part of the solution, a stabilization fund, as was done for the Polish zloty, is required to make the ruble convertible. And surely it's time to abolish U.S. cold war laws and regulations discriminating against the Russian economy.

All this is a bare minimum, but far more than we're now doing. It's said we can't afford even the few billion dollars a year that would be the U.S. contribution to such an international effort. Of course we could, simply by reducing defense spending in degrees truly responsive to cuts now under way in Russia. But such reductions are unlikely, even for the sake of our own pressing economic needs.

Clearly, a larger problem is at work: Four decades of cold war have so militarized our thinking that we can't think politically about our real national interests at home or abroad. For example, the post-cold war world may be even more dangerous than the cold war era if only because thousands of Soviet nuclear weapons, particularly battlefield ones, are scattered across that enormous, unstable territory. Only political solutions can bring security, but the only one proposed is to convert fifteen independent states, most of them with barely any democratic experience, into replicas of America. It's a conceit, not a policy. As for Russia itself, a Eurasian country, perhaps Europeans should bear the brunt of economic assistance. But if a reformed Russia moves closer to Europe—to Germany, for example—than to us, will we accept that natural political development? We should, but imagine our indignant outrage when we take time from bashing Japan to notice.

What's needed is new political thinking about ourselves and the world, not the new weapons we continue to develop. Indeed, future historians of the late twentieth century may wonder why so many unorthodox political ideas germinated in the old authoritarian Soviet system and so few in democratic America—why there were so few, for example, in our presidential campaigns. □

WHO WON IN GEORGIA?

Revolt of the Intelligentsia

KEN GLUCK

Moscow

"Democracy has triumphed in Georgia," the victorious soldiers assured people. If so, it will be the second victory in little more than a year for democracy in the former Soviet republic in the Caucasus. The first victory pushed the Communists from power in two sets of elections back before the Soviet Union died its unnatural death. The latest victory pushed elected President Zviad Gamsakhurdia from power in two weeks of gun battles on the streets of Tbilisi, the Georgian capital. The fighting brought several hundred rebel Georgian National Guardsmen and like-minded volunteers into the center of the city with their machine guns, howitzers, tanks and even a few rockets. From just before Catholic Christmas right up until Orthodox Christmas thirteen days later, they blasted away at the monumental beige government complex where Gamsakhurdia reigned with a similar assortment of weaponry.

Gamsakhurdia finally gave way to the incessant barrage, fleeing in the middle of the night to neighboring Armenia. With his fall, Georgia erected yet another landmark along the Soviet Union's road to a shining, post-Communist future. In May 1991 Gamsakhurdia became the first democratically elected president in the Soviet Union, beating out Boris Yeltsin by almost three weeks. As he abandoned the city in his armored Mercedes in the early hours of January 6, he became the first elected leader in the former Soviet Union to be violently overthrown.

The "people's insurrection against totalitarianism," as Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua put it, had triumphed. But the people who poured into the streets with the end of the fighting were mostly mourning the 120 dead and the shattered visage of the city. People walked down Rustaveli Prospect staring tearfully at the burned and gutted nineteenth-century buildings that had made Tbilisi one of the most beautiful cities in the Soviet Union. The shock of seeing the destroyed avenue somewhat eased the hatred that had tormented the city for months. But the battle lines remain in people's heads. Some

Ken Gluck is a journalist living in Moscow.

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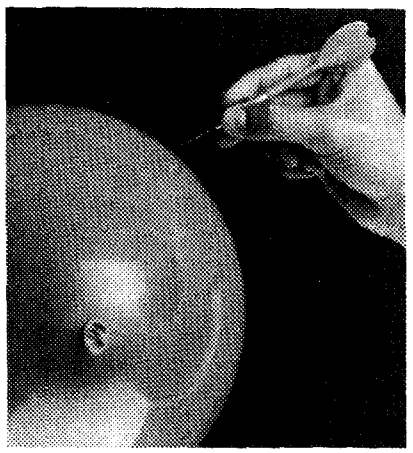

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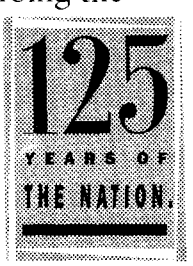

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walked in compact groups, holding on to one another tightly and wondering how Gamsakhurdia could have chosen to destroy their city rather than to leave peacefully. Others walked among the ruins, wiping their eyes and asking where the opposition had found the hate to destroy the most cherished part of the city. "It was the most beautiful place in Georgia, even though the Communists built it. Now they have destroyed it."

The presidential elections in May 1991, which brought Gamsakhurdia to power with 87 percent of the vote, marked the acme of democratic hopes in the republic. Gamsakhurdia, unlike the new leaders of most other republics, was not a recycled bureaucrat with a fresh ideology pinned to his chest. While Yeltsin was serving as an unusually dynamic party hack in Sverdlovsk, Gamsakhurdia worked with the Georgian Helsinki Union. As such he was the first and only former "dissident" to come to power in the former Soviet Union. (Gamsakhurdia's critics, cruelly, emphasize his forced television confession in 1978.)

As Gamsakhurdia's regime began to consolidate power, however, Georgia's spring of democratic hope soon began to freeze over. Paranoia became state policy. Gamsakhurdia's opponents became "dark forces attempting to sabotage Georgia." The spring 1991 earthquake that rocked the northern half of the republic didn't just happen; it was artificially created by the Soviet Defense Ministry. The anti-Gamsakhurdia demonstrators who paralyzed the capital in August and September were "Kremlin agents" working at the behest of a massive conspiracy involving former foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and even George Bush, who allegedly cut a sinister deal with the Soviets to deny Georgia its independence.

As elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, nationalism in Georgia has aggressively filled the vacuum left by the fall of Communism. And Gamsakhurdia used Georgian chauvinism viciously against the republic's ethnic minorities, who make up 30 percent of the population. Georgia's attempt to crush Ossetian autonomy in the north of the republic led to a slowly boiling war of hit-and-run attacks and hostage taking.

Reforms stalled under the anti-Communist government. Looking for bright spots in the economic picture, Givi Taktakashvili, the chairman of the Georgian Parliament's Committee on Economic Reform, was forced to turn to ancient history. "The West will come to Georgia's aid," he explained. "We helped the West during the Crusades. When the Mongols were descending on Europe, we formed a barrier. The West will help. Gentlemen never forget to pay their debts."

Political arrests, which had ceased in the waning months of Communist power, began to make a comeback under Gamsakhurdia. "We have to recognize that right now in Georgia there are more political prisoners than there were under Brezhnev," lamented Heinrich Altunian, a longtime human rights activist who is now a member of the Ukrainian Parliament. In his attacks on political opponents, Gamsakhurdia repeatedly lashed out at "enemies of the people," the rubric under which millions of Soviet citizens were sent to exile or death under Stalin. Georgia under Gamsakhurdia, wrote Nicholai Andreev in a full-page commentary in *Izvestia* in June, recalls the "years of stagnation" under Brezhnev. (Andreev's article was never read in Georgia. Whether by government order or their own feelings of loyalty to Gamsakhurdia, the local printing workers refused to publish that day's *Izvestia*.)

The obvious distinction that Andreev overlooked was that Gamsakhurdia, unlike Brezhnev, was capable of evoking fanatical devotion among a large part of the Georgian population. "He is our lord, our czar. He is a true democrat," one woman assured me after his fall. Over the summer of 1991 the republic became increasingly divided between those who venerated Gamsakhurdia and those who despised him. The veneration was seen mostly among the poor and in rural areas. The hate was concentrated in the capital.

Opposition to Gamsakhurdia revolved around a collection of small political parties (which more closely resembled political discussion groups than parties) and a loose circle of well-known Georgian cultural and academic figures. Their spirited and nonviolent opposition to Gamsakhurdia was interrupted by August's short-lived right-wing coup attempt. Just before the coup, Prime Minister Sigua quit his post, accusing Gamsakhurdia of stalling on reforms.

Tengiz Kitovani, a longtime Gamsakhurdia associate and the commander of the Georgian National Guard, took a more dangerous step. The Guardsmen had been offended by Gamsakhurdia's alleged agreement to disband the force on orders from the coup leaders in Moscow. Immediately after the coup Kitovani took his troops to Shavnabada, a military base on the outskirts of Tbilisi, and stopped taking orders from the President. "The Guard," he promised, "will side with the people." A few weeks later the rebel troops moved into the city to join the opposition takeover of the television studios. For the first time since the Soviet Army smashed a demonstration in April 1989, leaving twenty dead, military hardware returned to the streets of Tbilisi.

Most of the civilian opposition cheered as the soldiers came over to their side. In the late 1960s and 1970s many young Soviet intellectuals, like their Western counterparts, became enamored with the myth of the Third World revolutionary. The young bearded Che's of Latin America had attractively little in common with the pallor and slurred speech of the seemingly eternal Brezhnev, in spite of the shared rhetoric of Communism. The Georgian intellectuals who joined the National Guardsmen in their armed "liberation" of Tbilisi were susceptible to their own romantic insurrectionary dreams and

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seemed unaware of the obvious perils of the civil war they were fearlessly approaching. Once the shooting started, however, power and control inevitably shifted to the ones with the guns.

On December 22 shooting erupted at an opposition demonstration at the government headquarters. For the military wing of the opposition, this was the moment they had been waiting for, and possibly hoping for. The next day the rebel troops moved their heavy guns, tanks and soldiers into the city center to begin their assault on the government headquarters. In the street fighting that followed, Rustaveli Prospect was turned into a tangled mass of charred trucks and fallen trees. One by one, the buildings surrounding the government complex caught fire and burned, and stores were looted.

The bullets and rockets that rained down on Tbilisi came from Georgia's enlightened elite.

Just hours after Gamsakhurdia fled, accompanied by the remnants of his government and his defenders, the rebels slowly worked their way through the thick columns at the front of the government complex. Several of the columns hung uselessly from the roof of the building, their bases shot away during the fighting. The soldiers panicked at the popping noises coming from inside the complex and unleashed one last barrage of automatic-weapons fire into the courtyard. But the noises were only from the fire that raged on the right wing of the complex. The fighting was over.

That evening in the cold and dimly lit Hotel Iveria, the rebels celebrated their victory with a hoard of champagne, brandy and wine rescued from the destroyed government complex. As the rest of the city's occupants crawled out of their hiding places and bunkers and returned to the food lines that had only worsened during the conflict, the victorious fighters saw little hope in their future. Most likely they will go back to using the Kalashnikov rifles that lay alongside them as they drank, and the pastel-green hand grenades that hung from their chests. "Maybe Gamsakhurdia will start something in the west, and we'll be needed there. Maybe we'll go back to Ossetia to fight."

For all of Gamsakhurdia's bumbling authoritarianism and venomous paranoia, nothing he did seems to justify the little-thought-out decision to take up arms against him. None of his crimes seem to justify the death and destruction of Tbilisi's two-week civil war. Gamsakhurdia's muzzling of the press was halfhearted and ineffective. The politically motivated arrests came, for the most part, only after the opposition did its utmost to provoke the government into taking repressive measures. Even before the military campaign to oust him began, Gamsakhurdia's control over his own government was withering. Neither the government nor the opposition ever found the political will to lower the heat of the rhetoric and the level of violence. Some opposition leaders now mimic Gamsakhurdia's aggressive Georgian nationalism. A good number of the fighters who ousted him had first sharpened their skills in the bitter and bloody repression of Ossetian autonomy.

The rebels waged their war in the name of democracy, but new elections are not in Georgia's immediate future. "The people are still not ready," says Prime Minister Sigua (who has been reinstated). Elections were temporarily scheduled for May, but some of the opposition parties are calling for them to be further postponed until the fall. Georgian television is replete with the lurid details of the torture, beatings and theft that allegedly took place in Gamsakhurdia's headquarters during the fighting. "After the people hear of all the horrible crimes he committed, he will be left without any support," Sigua predicted.

Throughout the former Soviet Union, politicians hailed Georgia's new rulers as "the saviors of democracy." The U.S. State Department, like its European counterparts, did not praise Gamsakhurdia's overthrow, but neither was any criticism forthcoming.

The support of Moscow's intellectual elites for the new government is only partly explained by Gamsakhurdia's knack for offending even people and governments that had never heard of him. The Moscow intelligentsia see their political counterparts in the anti-Gamsakhurdia rebellion.

Georgia's new government is built on the illegitimacy of its first elected government. But the elections that placed Gamsakhurdia in power were inconveniently clean. In the absence of fraud, the rebels had to bolster their justification for overthrowing the legally elected President by emphasizing the low social origins of his supporters.

The leaders of the opposition never failed to point out that the core of Gamsakhurdia's supporters were uneducated farmers and workers from rural areas. The bullets and rockets that rained down on the government headquarters came from Georgia's enlightened elite, the very group we generally associate with progress in the former Soviet Union. And this elite, by its account, takes precedence over the poorer and less educated citizens who voted Gamsakhurdia into office ten months ago.

Such logic is shared by the new rulers and reformers throughout Russia and the other republics. They fear the same populist, anti-intellectual wave that emerged in Georgia. This fear overrides all their eloquent talk of elections and the rule of law. The new elites are hoping to save their "fragile democracy" from the "lumpenized masses." Freed from the Communist sham of a government of workers and peasants, the new elites are now loath to let workers and peasants elect their leaders. In Georgia the argument took its next logical step: demonizing the poor and hapless supporters of the elected President. "Gamsakhurdia's supporters are people with a base mentality. They are a dark and wanton mass," explained well-known film director Georgi Shengalaya, a close adviser to the Military Council, which now holds power.

If the new government does manage to wrest control from the Military Council, it will likely be an improvement on the quirky and incompetent regime that preceded it. But the

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tragedy of elections leading nowhere and of military force as the ultimate political arbiter has been firmly established as the foundation of Georgian post-Communism. Born in bloodshed, the new government will not easily overcome its disdain for Gamsakhurdia's followers.

On January 7—Christmas Day for Georgians and other Orthodox Christians—a march of 4,000 Gamsakhurdia supporters wound through the streets of the capital, mourning the fall of their leader. As they walked, endlessly chanting, "Zviadi, Zviadi," soldiers from the Military Council began shooting—some into the air and others into the crowd. As the marchers scattered, the soldiers, their faces hidden in scarves, chased them down the avenue, firing into the courtyards and alleyways where people tried to hide. It was the Military Council's first day in complete control of the city. □

SUPREME COURT KNOCKOUT

One-Two Punch for Political Asylum

KEITH J. KELLY

Two careful observers, the decision by the Supreme Court last month that cleared the way for the forced repatriation to Haiti of thousands of political refugees was no surprise. The Court had already indicated its contempt for human rights in two separate political-asylum decisions it handed down in mid-January.

One case involved Joe Doherty, who fought with the Irish Republican Army in what he perceived as a political revolution against the British in Northern Ireland. In the other, Jairo Jonathan Elias-Zacarias, a Guatemalan, decided to flee rather than accept forced conscription into a guerrilla force fighting his country's government. Both men reached the United States, were arrested and watched their cases slowly wind through the immigration bureaucracy and the federal courts. In separate rulings handed down one week apart, the Court cleared the way for each to be deported. Both decisions overturned lower-court rulings favorable to the individuals' pleas for political asylum, and in so doing, the Court seriously narrowed the definition of who is eligible for political asylum in the United States.

"The notion seems to be that the executive branch actors will have virtually unlimited power in determining political refugee protection," said Arthur Helton of the refugee committee of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. "It is very threatening and will only further erode refugee protection in the United States." Lucas Guttentag, director of the Immigration Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union in New York, said the two recent cases "represent a retreat by the Supreme Court from enforcing the Refugee Act."

Keith J. Kelly is editor at large at Cowles Business Media in New York City.

In May 1980, a British Army captain was killed in a skirmish between British forces and Doherty's I.R.A. unit. Doherty was captured but broke out of a British jail in Northern Ireland and fled to the United States [see "Doherty Waits," March 5, 1990]. In an early extradition hearing before a federal district court judge, Doherty was found to be a "political" offender and hence ineligible for extradition back to Britain, which had already tried him before a judge with no jury and sentenced him in absentia to life in prison. At the time Doherty was arrested in New York, in 1983, the U.S.-Britain extradition treaty said that common criminals should be handed back, but not those involved in political offenses. One federal district court judge said that Doherty fulfilled the political exemption in "classic form." The ruling was upheld on two subsequent appeals. With the extradition avenue effectively shut off, the U.S. government turned to the Immigration and Naturalization Service to accomplish its end of delivering Doherty to the British.

The I.N.S. sought to deport Doherty because he had entered the country with a forged passport, but when he argued that he should be allowed to have a hearing on his request for political asylum, the I.N.S. agreed. At one point in 1986 Doherty waived his request for such a hearing, but then the extradition laws in Ireland and the United Kingdom changed. He felt that constituted "new evidence" and that he should have a hearing to see if he was, indeed, eligible for political asylum here.

But in a highly unusual maneuver, Attorney General Edwin Meese intervened, saying it would be "against the national interest" of the United States to allow Doherty to stay; Meese ordered that he be deported to Britain. The action demonstrated the lengths to which the Attorney General would go to satisfy a political agenda of the Administration—even to the point of overruling its own agency, the I.N.S. While deportees are traditionally allowed to select the country to which they wish to be deported, Meese ordered a sham deportation to only one country, Britain. (The theory among Doherty's supporters is that his forced deportation was a payoff to the British for permitting the United States to launch its 1986 bombing raids on Libya from U.S. bases in Britain.)

"Disguised extradition," claimed Doherty's dedicated attorney, Mary Pike. She pointed out that Doherty held dual citizenship in Ireland and Britain because of his birth in Northern Ireland and had resided in Ireland before entering the United States. Pike pressed the case for a political asylum hearing. The Board of Immigration Appeals agreed Doherty should have a hearing. That effectively set aside Meese's ruling, but then in 1989 another political appointee, Attorney General Dick Thornburgh, intervened in the case, again saying that Doherty should be deported to Britain. The appeals board's decision was negated. "High politics surrounded this case from its inception," said Pike.

Doherty's next stop was before a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which in 1990 invalidated the Attorney General's decision and held that Doherty should be allowed to argue for political asylum. The government appealed and finally got the case to a forum in which it could win—the Supreme Court. In a 5-to-3 ruling

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handed down January 15, the Court upheld the right of the attorneys general to intervene in the case. Doherty's fight for freedom in the United States is all but over after an epic legal struggle of nearly nine years. (A group of more than sixty members of Congress is appealing to the new Attorney General, William Barr, to make yet another intervention in the case to allow an asylum hearing.)

It is a dangerous trail that we are now traveling.

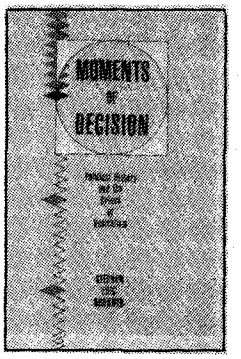
Any hope by human rights activists that the Doherty case was an aberration was dashed by the Court's 6-to-3 ruling on January 22 concerning Elias-Zacarias. In that decision, the I.N.S. argued that Elias-Zacarias had not demonstrated prior political intent before fleeing Guatemala and theorized that his actions were economically motivated. The appeals court disagreed and said that Elias-Zacarias was making a political statement by his refusal to serve with the rebel army. "The person resisting forced recruitment is expressing a political opinion hostile to the persecutor," said the appeals court. "The persecutor's motive in carrying out the kidnapping is political." But that line of reasoning was ignored in the decision by the Supreme Court.

Jack Healey, executive director of Amnesty International in the United States, called the High Court's findings in both cases "outrageous." At the A.C.L.U., Guttentag noted crucial differences in the two cases. "The problem in the Doherty case is that he has never been given a full and fair hearing on his request for asylum." Although Elias-Zacarias was given an asylum hearing, Guttentag believes the Supreme Court's ruling in his case was based on "an ivory-tower view of persecution that ignores the reality of life and death in Guatemala."

In the long run, the Elias-Zacarias case may be more unsettling to human rights activists, if only because of its impact on a 1991 decision in a class-action suit. That decision requires the I.N.S. to rehear some 500,000 cases involving people from Guatemala and El Salvador who had sought asylum here (*American Baptist Churches v. Thornburgh*). The effect of the Elias-Zacarias decision on those cases is not entirely clear, but it appears it is a dangerous trail that we are now traveling. By placing the ultimate right to decide refugee matters primarily under the domain of a politically motivated presidential appointee such as the attorney general and/or his immigration officials, the Supreme Court is opening the way for all future immigration decisions to be bent to fit the foreign policy agenda of the United States. Flagrant abuse or misinterpretation of the law by those officials now has little chance of being set right by the federal courts.

On asylum matters, the highest court in the land appears to be no better than a kangaroo court, with justices ready to hop, skip and jump to the will of the executive branch. The only recourse is for Congress to pass new political asylum laws that are guided not by foreign policy but by genuine concern for human rights. □

TALK POLITICS WITH ROUTLEDGE



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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Clear It With Sidney

SUSAN A. GLENN

LABOR WILL RULE: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor. *By Steven Fraser. Free Press. 688 pp. $29.95.*

Once upon a time in the years before the aftermath, before postmodernism, poststructuralism, postliberalism and postindustrialization, Sidney Hillman's name was a household word. The New Deal order with which Hillman was associated ushered in the age of positive government, of do-anything, willing-to-innovate government. It was a time when the confident state and the big unions shared a misplaced optimism in their ability to solve the problems of advanced industrial society. And it was perhaps one of the great ironies of American history that Sidney Hillman, a Jew, a socialist, a quintessential outsider, should play such a central role in bringing the United States into the modern bureaucratic age.

From his early career as head of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and later as one of the founders of the C.I.O., to the many advisory posts he held as labor's representative in the New Deal alphabet agencies, to his closing years as organizer of the C.I.O. political action committee that would insure Roosevelt a final term, Hillman's life provides a window on the fate of the labor movement in an era when the possibilities for a more enlightened and moral political order did not seem foreclosed.

Steven Fraser's masterful new biography focuses on Hillman's complex and often contradictory career as a labor leader and politico. He shows us in fresh and illuminating ways the struggle of Hillman's generation of progressive labor leaders to bring the unions, the state and big industry into a cooperative relationship that would foster industrial democracy on the shop floor and sustain a vision of social justice for all Americans.

Hillman's background seems an unlikely beginning for a man who would become to many the symbol of the American "labor statesman." Born in 1887 in the tiny Jewish *shtetl* of Zagare in northwest Lithuania to a family of rabbis and petty merchants, Hillman was sent to a yeshiva near the town of Kovno. But not long after he began his studies he came under the influence of secular intellectuals who would forever change the course of his life. The Jewish workers' Bund, an illegal revolutionary organization composed of Jewish intellectuals and worker allies, sought simultaneously to overthrow the Czar, usher in a socialist form of government and unseat the traditional Orthodox theocracy that structured the internal life of Jewish Eastern Europe.

Hillman bridged two worlds: the shop-floor culture and the matrix of planners who sought law and order in industry.

For Hillman, as for other "half-intellectuals" who made up the Bund's recruits, revolutionary agitation and secular ideology were a powerful education in the politics of utopian dreaming and, more practically, in the logistics of labor organizing. After the failed revolution of 1905, Hillman and thousands of others fled to safer shores, mainly to the big cities of America. Hillman went to join a landsman in Chicago where he found work as a pantsmaker at the giant Hart, Schaffner & Marx clothing factory. There he came face to face with the contradictions between American political freedoms and what seemed to many idealistic immigrants like the czarism of the garment industry's shop floor. Low wages, long hours, arbitrary discipline and irrational and inefficient systems of production led to a massive wave of strikes between 1900 and the end of World War I.

The great Chicago clothing workers' strike of 1910 helped turn Hillman into a labor leader, a "cultural arbiter" sought after for his skills as both organizer and mediator in an industry plagued by ethnic discord and internal chaos. The strike contributed to Hillman's political realignment away from the incendiary revolutionism of the Bund toward the orderly gradualism of Progressive era liberalism. The efforts to settle the strike brought him under the powerful sway of the "luminaries" of Chicago Progressivism—Jane Addams, Clarence Darrow and Harold Ickes. Hillman's mentors sensed correctly that their student had the potential to bridge two seemingly irreconcilable worlds: the parochial shop-floor culture of mass production industry with its petty rivalries, ethno-cultural tensions and entrenched artisanal habits, and the social-scientific organizational matrix of planners, mediators and bureaucrats, who sought to bring law and order to industry. Hillman became a lifelong convert to the Progressive ideology of "industrial democracy," the notion that cooperative bureaucratic arrangements between manufacturers and organized labor could bring mutually beneficial gains. So from 1910 through the 1920s, with varying degrees of success, both the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.) and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers union (A.C.W.)—along with manufacturing firms willing to cooperate—experimented with "impartial" grievance and arbitration boards, wage-scale and price boards. This was the joint decision-making "machinery" that was designed to—but never did—replace the open combat of the strike. Shop-floor militants, recalcitrant anarchists and socialists and most of the manufacturers still refused to fall into line.

The first half of Fraser's book is by far the best history we have of the inner political and industrial turmoil of the fledgling garment unions as they experimented with the rudiments of modern industrial management. It is not a parochial story. Indeed, Fraser's book goes on to show us that the history of the "new unionism" in the garment industry, and especially Sidney Hillman's role in laying its foundations, was critical to the trajectory of mass production unionism from 1933 on and to the orchestration of labor-management-government relations that would characterize what Fraser calls the New Deal order.

Fraser's biography plots the remarkable transformation of the labor question in American political history. In 1933 organized labor was at a new low, having declined by nearly two million members over

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the years since the end of World War I. The legislative supports that came about with the New Deal's National Industrial Recovery Act—especially section 7(a), which legitimated labor's right to organize and collectively bargain—contributed to a significant upsurge in union membership, from 17 percent of the work force in 1929 to 33 percent by 1934.

Hillman sat on the National Recovery Administration's Industrial Advisory Board, where it was his job to handle the growing number of trade union complaints about industry violations of N.R.A. codes, adjudicate quarrels and represent labor's interest in matters related to code protections on maximum work hours and industry price-fixing agreements. On paper the N.R.A. epitomized the Progressive reform era's model of economic planning, impartial administration and democratic consensus. But in practice, as Hillman quickly learned, the agency was mired in "acrimonious self-interest, administrative ineptitude, and political vacillation." Workers across the country renamed it the "National Run Around." Hillman's efforts notwithstanding, the code authority was dominated by industry spokesmen who violated the policies they had helped to draft.

Nevertheless, this bitter pill and others that Hillman would subsequently be forced to swallow did not shake his faith either in the New Deal or in Roosevelt. According to Fraser, it was the potent combination of Hillman's overly idealistic view of the potential of the state to insure material and social security and his own ambitions for power that convinced him to stick with F.D.R. and the New Deal even when doing so threatened to jeopardize the welfare of organized labor.

Much of the story Fraser tells moves back and forth between Hillman's contributions to the New Deal and his ultimate inability to exercise the influence necessary to protect labor's interests. That was one part of Hillman's dilemma. The other was the need to turn the rank and file of the labor movement into willing adherents of the imperatives of "bureaucratic and commercial regularity." Even if the New Deal agencies had lived up to their stated purpose with regard to the rights and responsibilities of organized labor, the C.I.O. could not force its constituencies to uphold labor's end of the bargain. Strikes were endemic, especially during World War II, despite the C.I.O.'s no-strike pledge. The internal dynamics of the mass production unions defied the orderly social-science approach to conflict resolution upon which the New Deal pinned its hopes for industrial recovery and stability. Fraser describes the C.I.O. as a "social centrifuge" whose "energies dissipated through the rivalries of faith and social status." It was a labor movement not only suspicious of the Washington bureaucracy but a "minefield of combustible ethnocultures" rent by "contending ethnic loyalties, racial and religious phobias and political and moral passions." Such descriptions present a compelling challenge to historians who have stressed the centrality of the C.I.O.'s "Culture of Unity" in the hearts and minds of the rank and file.

Fraser's book cleverly poses a question about the labor movement and the bureaucratic state that is usually framed in terms of the C.I.O.'s relationship to the Communist Party during the 1930s and 1940s. Who captured whom? He argues that the activist political circles of reformers, liberal businessmen, social scientists and visionary trade unionists who gathered around influential jurists like Felix Frankfurter and Louis Brandeis and Progressive senators like Robert La Follette Jr. and Robert Wagner represented a "real political threat" to the old political order, threatening at times to "upset the balance of power in American politics." But they were never able to drive the "tories" and money changers out of the Democratic Party. Indeed, the real paradox of Hillman's career was that the closer he seemed to get to the centers of power, the more ground the labor movement lost. His presence as an adviser to a number of Depression and wartime agencies grew increasingly ceremonial. Though Hillman shouted a lot about labor's needs and industry's abuses of power, his advice was rarely heeded.

All of this magnified one of the central tensions of Hillman's life, that of being the social outsider as political insider. From the very beginning of his career as a union leader, Hillman identified with Jewish socialism but maintained a "studied aloofness" to Jewish-identified politics, including the Zionist movement. This posture alienated him from many of his contemporaries in and around the Jewish labor movement, including I.L.G.W.U. chief David Dubinsky and the powerful editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, Abraham Cahan.

What seems most to have rankled Yiddish-speaking comrades was Hillman's dogged desire to promote himself among the *goyish sheyne* (beautiful gen-

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tiles) of national power. "In the face of his own talmudic mien and the guttural Yiddishness of his English," writes Fraser, Hillman sought to transcend the "tough and homey" political base of his own ghetto origins. Whenever possible Hillman avoided public speaking engagements where his thick accent would be on display or arranged for some representatives of "the goyim" to speak in his place. He once confessed to a colleague "I must work harder. If I fail it will be the failure of the Jew Hillman."

It was the Jew Hillman who became the ideological flashpoint for New Deal opponents in the 1944 presidential election. Hillman's successful deployment of the nation's first political action committee, a C.I.O. organ that marshaled effective support for F.D.R.'s re-election, further inflamed those who sought to dismantle the New Deal. Portraying the Democratic Party as the C.I.O.'s political "hostage," they floated a rumor that Roosevelt had given Hillman veto power over his choice of a vice presidential running mate. Arthur Krock brought it to national attention, writing in *The New York Times* that F.D.R. had issued the order to "Clear it with Sidney" before the ticket was established.

"From the moment the story appeared," writes Fraser, " 'Clear it with Sidney' became the leitmotif of a political *opera bouffe* conducted by the Republican high command and designed to arouse every nativist, anti-Semitic, anti-communist, and antilabor instinct in the electorate." The Hearst papers followed by sponsoring a limerick contest playing on the theme. The *New York Mirror* cautioned about a "Hillman-Browder Communist Conspiracy to take over the U.S. through the machinery of the alleged Democratic Party" and Republican vice presidential candidate John Bricker announced that "the great Democratic Party has become the Hillman-Browder communistic party with Franklin Roosevelt as its front." Across the nation Republican political billboards asked: "It's Your Country—Why Let Sidney Hillman Run It?"

If anything is missing in this richly documented and incredibly detailed story of labor's rise and fall from power, it is Hillman the private man. Fraser's perspective is that of an aerial photographer with a wide-angle lens. He gives us a stunning view of the larger terrain on which Hillman and his generation of union leaders maneuvered, but rarely are we treated to the private correspondence or confessions, the intimate glimpses that might make Hillman the man add up to more than the sum of his political parts. As Fraser warns us in his preface, this is "biography only in the loosest sense."

Sidney Hillman was only 59 years old when he died of a heart attack in 1946. The news of his passing interrupted regular radio broadcasting and received front-page coverage in most of the nation's metropolitan dailies. Hillman had lived long enough to see labor come of age as a vital force in American political life. That his name is no longer a household word tells us both about the shallowness of our historical memory and the fragility of his achievement. □

The Blockbusters' Triumph

MURRAY POLNER

THE DEATH OF AN AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY: A Tragedy of Good Intentions. *By Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon. Free Press. 357 pp. $24.95.*

I grew up in Brownsville, the Jewish working-class ghetto neighborhood in Brooklyn populated almost entirely (save for pockets of blacks) by Eastern European immigrants that was so eloquently described by Alfred Kazin in *A Walker in the City.* I left in 1950 but until now never really understood how so dynamic and vigorous a community could atrophy and die as quickly as it did. Although my own family stayed on, synagogues gave way to black Baptist and Pentecostal churches almost overnight, it seems. Gone forever were the shops and cafeterias that lined Pitkin Avenue and other heavily traveled streets. Gone, too, was the nearby racially integrated high school where I once taught. Soon ambitious, industrious black families moved into the homes abandoned by the Jews; immediately, as if they all knew how close to the edge they were, the blacks erected signs pleading "Keep Our Neighborhood Safe and Clean."

By the mid- to late-1960s virtually all the Jews had fled, either because of fear of crime, which was genuine, or their own racist sentiments, also genuine. It's easy to forget that the post-World War II years were years of promise; few of us did not believe we could do better—economically, at least—than our parents. We certainly were more mobile. Eventually, the suburbs beckoned, as did the universities, Wall Street and Washington, D.C. We were making it. In Brownsville the blockbusters (and eventually, as happened everywhere else in our cities, the drug dealers and other criminals) began to kill off whatever hopes there may have been, and a now-familiar tale unfolded. The area was soon all black, with pockets of Puerto Ricans, and composed of fearful homeowners, public housing projects and tenements owned by black and Jewish slumlords. When I drove at night through the streets I had grown up in I was afraid to step out of my car.

Looking back, I cannot remember any Jewish "defense" organization, any civil rights group, indeed, anyone with access to politicians and the press protesting what was happening to these people, black and white. Nor do I recall any effort to try to fashion a genuinely integrated community, although I know from personal experience that some people would have liked to try. After all, it was an era of high, if naïve, hopes for civil rights, and such an effort was indeed made by homeowners in the Laurelton section of Queens. But it was not "the voices of great spiritual leaders" that dominated those years of change and relocation, as Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon write in *The Death of an American Jewish Community.* Rather, it was "the voices of blockbusters who phoned with veiled threats at midnight . . . the voices of angry and violent youths and bitter and bigoted elderly."

Levine and Harmon's groundbreaking study offers for the first time some provocative clues to why these ethnic enclaves vanished. Their models are three Boston neighborhoods, Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury, mirror images of my old home. The book opens with a Boston blockbuster's 1987 confession—though it sounds more like the preening of a real estate Salesman of the Year: "We were told, you get the listings any way you can. It's pretty easy to do: Just scare the hell out of them! And that's what we

Murray Polner was editor of Present Tense *magazine. He wrote* Rabbi: The American Experience *(Holt, Rinehart & Winston) and* Branch Rickey: A Biography *(Atheneum) and edited the recently published* Jewish Profiles *(Jason Aronson).*

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did. . . . We weren't subtle about it. You'd say, how would you like it if they rape your daughter and you've got a mulatto grandchild? . . . And it did sway them. They sure as hell sold!"

The anonymous realtor—his recollections are from the *Metropolitan Real Estate Journal*—was describing how he and others panicked the Jewish residents of Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury into selling the homes they had worked so hard to buy in the years between the two world wars. Then, of course, the realtors harvested huge profits from black buyers desperate for decent housing in safe neighborhoods. But there is far more to it than real estate thugs ravaging a cohesive community. For Levine and Harmon, the former a professor of sociology and religion at Boston University and the latter editor of the *Brookline Citizen*, have quite a story to tell.

In the early 1960s, 90,000 immigrant and first-generation Jews in these Boston neighborhoods were abruptly uprooted, some moving early to the white suburbs and others pushed out by fear and greed, as happened in Brownsville and, say, Cleveland's 105th Street and Baltimore's North Gay Street. If anyone was to blame, it was, Levine and Harmon conclude, "external forces"—Boston bankers, real estate moguls (often wealthy, well-meaning people, not your grubby local blockbuster types), politicians, federal agencies and the White House. When he was President, Harry Truman couldn't bring himself to enforce fair housing in communities built with and insured by federal funds. Often they were hardly men of evil (few women, if any, were involved save as victims) but rather liberals and moderates trying to earn healthy profits and do a good turn for black people as well. The result, Levine and Harmon write, was "a tragedy of good intentions."

These external forces hatched a plan from the top down, with no consultation with the people most affected. It was designed to use federally guaranteed money to enable black homeowners and renters to buy affordable, decent housing in safe neighborhoods, the better to integrate. It was also an effort to ward off black anger, to give blacks "a stake in the system."

"Using federal programs that guaranteed housing loans for low-income residents, the bankers unilaterally redefined these programs such that funds were to be made available almost exclusively to blacks." Then the consortium of bankers (called the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group, or B-BURG) decided to carve out a "well-defined inner-city district within which, and *only within* which, blacks could obtain the attractive, federally insured housing loans" [my italics].

The tough question, though, was which neighborhood was to be chosen for the experiment. Before long, the planners discovered that no one wanted blacks in "their" neighborhoods, neither in ethnic Boston nor in the surrounding white middle-class suburbs. Nor did any of the planners volunteer their own communities. They deliberately avoided Irish and Italian areas because they feared that the people in those communities would whip out guns and chains the moment the first black family tried to move in. Certainly black families expected this, as was later demonstrated during the South Boston school desegregation war of the 1970s. So the men of action at the top of their Boston towers must have asked themselves what neighborhoods would allow blacks to buy in. The answer: three of Boston's oldest lower-middle- and working-class Jewish neighborhoods. They wanted to save wealthier people from integrated housing, and they hoped the area's Jews would prove to be more understanding of blacks as neighbors. Jews, they believed,

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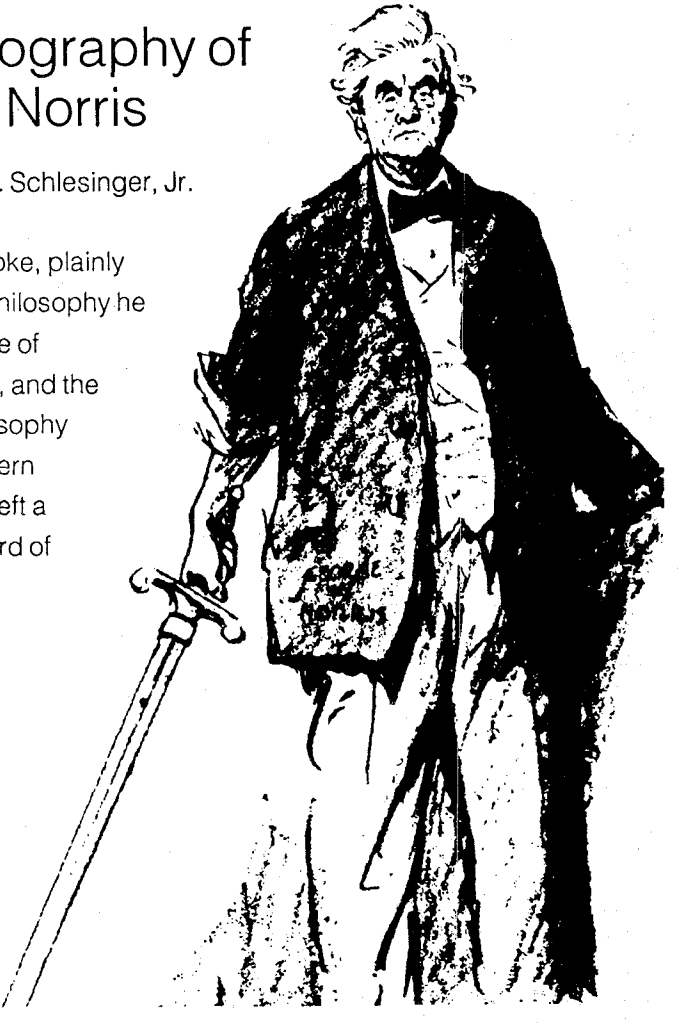

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were more tolerant than the Irish and Italians. And besides, many of the wooden three-deckers and other houses had long since become "unprofitable" to banks since "so many of the residents had paid off their mortgages."

By 1967, though, as the scheme got under way, most Jews and their communal organizations had already sold out and moved elsewhere, planting the seeds, say the authors, of contemporary racial strains between blacks and Jews. "This used to be a nice place to live. What did they do to the neighborhood?" Jews in nearby suburbs would ask years later. " 'They,' of course," note Levine and Harmon, "would mean the blacks, not the planners, bankers, and real estate agents whose dirty work is still so much in evidence." "Equally pained and accusatory" were common black explanations for why the neighborhoods disintegrated: The Jews ran away just as they started to rise economically and politically. "Those Jews voluntarily abandoned their cherished neighborhood, its community and institutions, rather than give blacks a chance to be good neighbors. Moreover, Jews cheated the blacks by selling them houses in disrepair at highly inflated prices. And now these Jews [so the counter-argument went] sitting by the rivers of their suburban Babylons, shed insincere tears when they remember their 'lost Zion.' "

Levine and Harmon rightfully castigate organized Jewry and its leaders for neither questioning nor challenging the scheme. But what's a Jewish "leader"? Most who lay claim to the title today are leaders by virtue of their ability to donate money. Unaccountable and unelected, they are, in Arthur Hertzberg's classic phrase, concerned mainly with "dinnerability," that is, the wish to be courted in Washington and Jerusalem and quoted in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. It was certainly no different back in the 1960s. "None of the [Jewish] federation leaders and powerful members of the Jewish community . . . dared" to use their political and financial muscle to influence City Hall, the authors note with justifiable bitterness. When Levine and Harmon interviewed ex-Mayor Kevin White years after, he told them, "The Jewish community was not making noise." And as 2,500 buildings were smashed by wreckers in Washington Park in Roxbury, to be replaced by 800 new structures at inflated rents—far too high for displaced black families—black leaders were just as silent, leading the authors to conclude, "Such passivity would be well noted by future planners of the new Boston."

When Rabbi Gerald Zelermyer of Temple Beth Hillel in Dorchester, one of the few who were fighting to keep the area's Jews from selling out to blockbusters, had acid thrown in his face by two young blacks and a scrawled note handed him saying, "Lead the Jewish racists out of Mattapan," he was persuaded to publicize the attack in Boston's Jewish newspaper. That may not sound heroic, but given the generally craven nature of the American Jewish press, which exists primarily to print public relations handouts, celebrate wealthy contributors and hew closely to the party line, the *Jewish Advocate*'s offer to print Zelermyer's article denouncing the city's Jewish leaders for treating the lower-middle- and working-class Jews as "flagging stepchildren" was startling. In his article the young rabbi explained the destruction of the old immigrant, Yiddish-flavored neighborhoods: "The sad fact is that the community beyond has sounded a requiem for our area through almost wholesale indifference to our plight."

In the end, we come to the incendiary question of class, race and ethnicity. Levine and Harmon offer only vague suggestions that we need to be "respectful of community," taking care, however, to note that while community control has often been used in a demagogic manner, it has to its credit also kept the "unholy alliance of entrepreneurs and bureaucrats" at bay. But always there is a dilemma: While the "community impact studies" the authors propose might fend off unwanted development, they would also tend to wall off communities from people with darker skins. The so-called ethnicity movement, so widely promoted in the 1960s and 1970s, had as its premise the building of bridges between people of different nationalities and religions (though rarely of different races); clearly, it has failed.

Far more effective—then and now—would be a serious effort to uphold the federal Fair Housing Act, which outlaws discrimination in housing, and, the authors propose, the Community Reinvestment Acts, passed by Congress in 1977, which insist that banks help save their depositors' communities by lending money in the neighborhoods they serve. These laws fell into disuse in the Reagan era. Could they have helped preserve these communities? It's hard to say, since not enough people in Boston chose to stay. Soon after, another community did put up a fight to save its homes. When blacks

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began moving into Cleveland Heights in the mid-1960s, the estimated 15,000 Jews—out of a total population of 60,000—began to fear that their synagogues and communal institutions were endangered. The local Jewish Federation took the lead and dealt with day-to-day concerns such as getting more police and better street lighting. It also declared war against the blockbusters. Then, in 1972, an Orthodox rabbi, again with Jewish Federation help, instituted a mortgage assistance program and interest-free loans to lure non-Jewish whites to the area to preserve integration. He also supported open housing, saying publicly, "You either have to live with integration or get off the globe." And he reinforced his words by living in Cleveland Heights.

None of this happened in Brownsville or Boston. As a result, Levine and Harmon lament, "there are no winners in this story. But there are big losers," both the former and present residents. One group lost a way of life and the other was discarded, with no place to go. It is fashionable these days to lay blame on class, not race. Yet all the studies released in the past few months—and the mountains of studies that preceded them—reveal, at least to my satisfaction, that race, not class, is the dirtiest secret of all. □

Past Present

GWYNETH CRAVENS

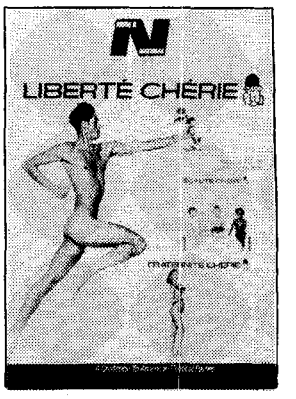
"Human life—indeed all life—*is* poetry," writes Lou Andreas-Salomé in her memoir, *Looking Back*, published, with thorough footnotes, in German in 1951 and now smoothly translated into English by Breon Mitchell and brought out by Paragon House. "It's *we* who live it, unconsciously, day by day, like scenes in a play, yet in its inviolable wholeness it lives *us*, it composes *us*. This is something far different from the old cliché 'Turn your life into a work of art'; we are works of art—but we are not the artist."

The scenes she relates in this short book are of the most essential kind and concern experiences selected as if she viewed them as luminous gifts, fundamental in shaping her nature and yet extending beyond ordinary life: her first experience of God, her Russian childhood, her first romance, her close friendships with, among others, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud, her intimacy with Rainer Maria Rilke. Some of her recollections and facts may be distorted or even false—biographers disagree about how truthful she is—and, whether by chance or design, she grows vague or omissive from time to time. She remembers Nietzsche saying, when they were introduced, "From what star have we fallen together here?" but can't recall whether she kissed him during an episode on a mountaintop he referred to as "the most rapturous moment of my life."

She could easily have aggrandized herself by listing all the important men in European literary, philosophical, artistic, theatrical and political circles who fell in love with her beauty, her brilliant blue gaze and her capacity to listen intently, only to be sent away or offered comradeship. But she rather modestly mentions just a few. Nietzsche found her the most intelligent, gifted and reflective of all the people he knew. The publisher Kurt Wolff wrote, "No woman has radiated a stronger or more direct influence in German-speaking lands in the last 150 years." Men were intrigued by her intensity. She usually obeyed her instincts: Once, changing her mind at the last minute about a tryst, she left her would-be lover, later decided she wanted him after all, and to satisfy her longing ate one of his letters. Untroubled by convention, she and the philosopher Paul Rée lived platonically together, and at one point she decided to enlarge the household to include a third "spiritual comrade," Nietzsche, who proposed and whose rage at being spurned found its way into his subsequent diatribes against women.

Friedrich Carl Andreas, an eccentric, vibrant scholar of Persian two decades her senior, did succeed as a suitor, perhaps because he stabbed himself in the chest, nearly killing himself, during a discussion of their engagement—she has little to say about this event except that she was concerned that she would be thought a murderer—or perhaps because, as she claims, she was utterly compelled by his "creaturely" nature (she joined him in his habit of wearing roughly woven clothes and tramping barefoot through fields). In any case, the result was a mar-

Gwyneth Cravens's latest novel is The Gates of Paradise *(Ticknor & Fields). She edits "Past Present," an occasional column.*



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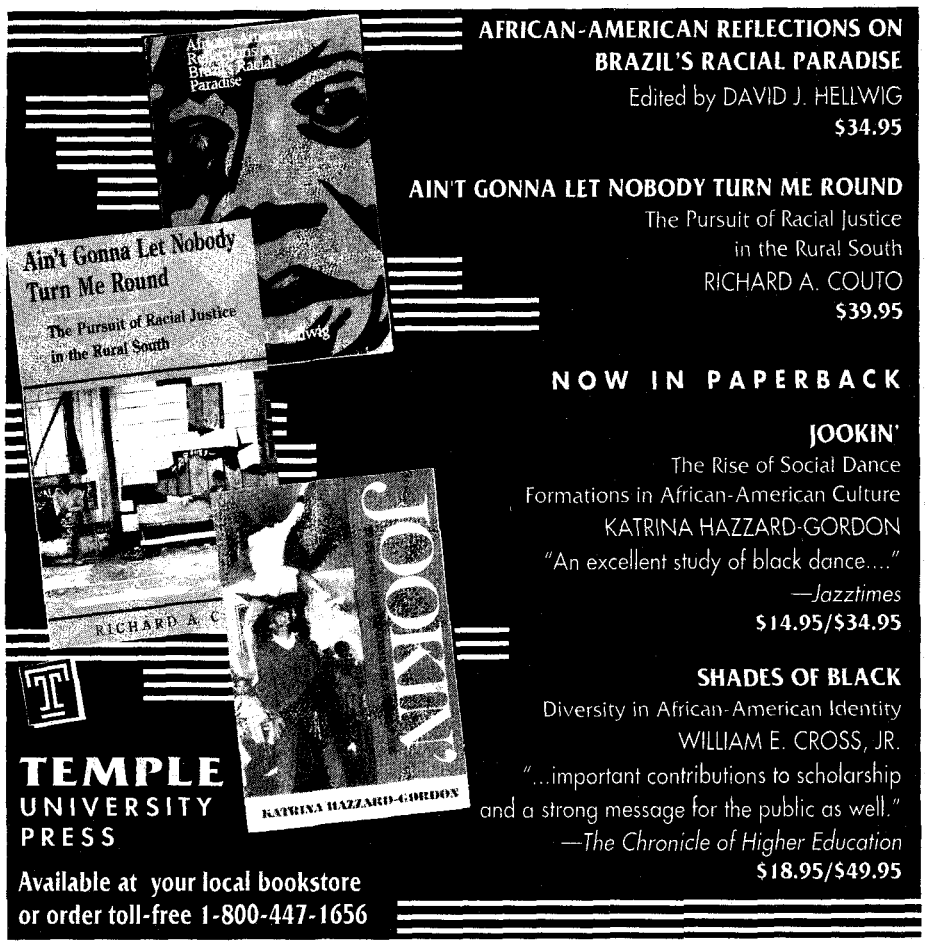
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riage she refused to consummate. She writes about being awakened from her sleep by choking sounds and discovering, with horror, that he had lain down beside her and that her hands were wrapped around his throat in a stranglehold.

This chilly arrangement, which lasted for four decades and seemed to warm up a bit only in the last year of his life, gave her, at her insistence, the solitude and autonomy to develop her own intellect and spirit, as well as the freedom to spend time with the much younger Rilke, who appears to have been the sole man to capture her passion. Initially she was unimpressed with his poetic genius, but she concealed her opinion and nurtured him. She persuaded him to change his name to Rainer from René, to alter his handwriting and to transform his overwhelming and persistent fears into poetry. After three years, she ended the affair—"I'll be true to my memories forever," she wrote in a diary, "but I'll never be true to other people"—and he was devastated. For the rest of his life they corresponded, and he dedicated a number of poems to her, one of which went, "Blot out my eyes: I'll still see you. . . . /And if you throw a torch into my brain/ I'll bear you still upon my blood." He also wrote:

> You were the most maternal of women
> and a friend just like a man.
> Outwardly you appeared a woman,
> and more often you were a child.
> You were the tenderest of my
> encounters,
> and the most unyielding with which I
> wrestled.
> You were the height that blessed me—
> and became the depth that swallowed
> me.

From the beginning—she was born in 1861 into a Protestant German family residing in St. Petersburg—she followed her own inclinations, contriving to study in Zurich and then to move about Germany and Austria, fending off the concern of her family and proclaiming for herself a level of freedom unheard of for women of the nineteenth century. Rather than organizing her talents and drive toward the attainment of a particular goal—"It almost seemed to me as if anything one touched *correctly* would lead one to the center of things"—she plunged into whatever electrified her at the moment. She traveled (her journey through Russia with Rilke was pivotal for his work); she wrote ardent, bombastic poems, if we're to judge by those she includes in her memoirs; she turned out intellectual analyses and critiques to maintain financial

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independence from her family and husband and as an outlet for her enthusiasms. In onrushing, metaphor-strewn prose she discussed religion and eroticism and love and equality of the sexes as well as the philosophy of Nietzsche, the plays of Ibsen, the productions of Max Reinhardt, the psychology of Adler and Freud. She studied with Freud, becoming his dear and much admired friend, and settled down to practice psychoanalysis in Göttingen, having understood from him that "to leave a thing undecided, instead of racking our brains in vain over inaccessible knowledge, is both the proper and worthiest duty of the human mind: a victory over the attendant desire to reduce everything to a common formula."

Freud seemed amused by her sunny nature. She reports that, after a particularly shocking discussion in his study group, he said to her "in amazed disbelief: 'Even after we've talked about the most terrible things, you look like Christmas is coming.' " When she showed him her optimistic hymn "Prayer to Life," which Nietzsche had set to music and which concluded with the affirmation "If you have no more joy to give,/At least you still grant pain," Freud remarked, "Just one persistent cold dragging on would be enough to cure me of such wishes." But her trust in life's bounty remained even in later years, when she remarked, "Whatever is going to happen to me, will happen. And I never lose the certainty that arms are open behind me to receive me."

Public receptivity continues nearly sixty years later. There are three biographies in English; the diary she kept during her psychoanalytic training with Freud, *The Freud Journal of Lou Andreas Salomé* (Basic), appeared some years ago. A collection of her critiques, *Ibsen's Heroines*, was recently published by Black Swan, and Paragon House is bringing out an edition of her correspondence with Rilke. However, the bulk of her poetry, essays and fiction—some of which, like her book on Nietzsche, were highly acclaimed in her day—is now mostly forgotten. Her life has turned out to be her most enduring work.

The culture in which she had exulted was sliding toward darkness by the time of her death in 1937. Right up until the end, her memory was fresh and alive, and she continued to revise the manuscript of her memoirs. The most touching sketches were added later by her editor; she had set them aside as recollections that insisted "upon their right to solitude." One, titled "What's Missing From the Sketch," is a contemplation of her enigmatic husband written after his death. During a moment in which she was deeply moved, she asked him, perhaps referring to her time with Rilke, " 'Can I tell you what's happened to me since then——.' Quickly, without allowing me to draw a breath to say another word, he replied: 'No.' . . . Thus a deep and inviolable silence arched above us and what we shared, a silence from which we never emerged." The other chapter, "Epilogue, 1934," is addressed to Rilke eight years after his death and appears to contain all the things she had left unsaid. She still seems, in her 70s, anguished and baffled about why she ended the affair and mystified by "our ultimate distance, our ultimate intimacy." She writes, "I could have confessed to you word for word what you said in declaring your love: 'You alone are real.' Thus we were a couple even before we had become friends, and becoming friends wasn't so much a matter of choice as it was the fulfillment of that underlying marriage. We were not two halves seeking the other: we were a whole which confronted that inconceivable wholeness with a shiver of surprised recognition." □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Two Shakespearean Actors
Sight Unseen
Boesman and Lena
The Visit

A year ago, in an article in *The Atlantic*, I predicted that in the near future Broadway theater would offer only long-running musicals and one or two revivals in a reduced number of theaters, sustained to a large degree by public funding. Broadway would become Manhattan's Disneyland, a protected enclave for the entertainment of tourists, offering a curated art such as we are accustomed to witnessing at the opera house and concert hall. If I'd waited a year to write that article I might have presented the same picture as an observation rather than a prophecy, for the fabulous invalid has taken a dramatic turn for the worse in just the past season. Shows have been closing faster than this reviewer has been able to review them. The one indigenous new musical, *Nick and Nora*, flopped after an

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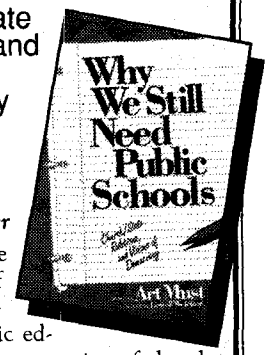

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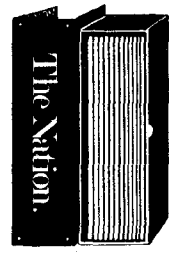

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egregious 2½ months of previews, and other less costly fiascos include the first two dismally high-minded but lowbrowed revivals by Tony Randall's National Actors Theatre of *The Crucible* and *A Little Hotel on the Side*, and a thumbs-down comedy, *Crazy He Calls Me*, the third play to sink under the auspices of the well-intentioned Broadway Alliance.

Despite all this, or for that reason, *The New York Times* has lately run a front-page story headlined "Signs of Hope for Broadway: 22 Marquees Light Up Again." A careful reader will discern signs of ill omen rather than of hope. Attendance at Broadway shows in the period prior to January 27 sank in just the last year from 4.7 million to 4.2 million; a decade ago the figure was 6.6 million. With ticket prices soaring toward $100, gross receipts have hidden some of the slack, but that may be changing. Recently, ticket prices have actually been lowered, as Adam Smith might have predicted.

The "signs of hope" that the *Times* discerns are the openings of no fewer than eighteen Broadway shows between March 17 and April 29, a concentration dictated by the producers' superstitious conviction that those who will be voting for the Tony Awards have attention spans of about one month. For those who can afford to spend a month in New York Theaterland, it amounts to a festival of sorts; but for city residents it's just feast and famine, with famine what we can count on.

An example: The best new play of the Broadway season, *Two Shakespearean Actors*, will have already closed by the time this review appears. It was produced by Lincoln Center (it would otherwise not have been produced in New York at all) at a Broadway theater, and it is the work of one of America's most distinguished playwrights, Richard Nelson, who has made his success in London, where playwrights can.

Should I, the play having closed, tantalize you with what you cannot see? The leading actors in the title roles, Brian Bedford and Victor Garber, were grand, and sometimes, as required, grandiose; others among the cast of twenty-seven who delivered memorable performances included Eric Stoltz as a deliciously loutish Dion Boucicault, and Zeljko Ivanek as Bedford's traveling companion and dogsbody. Jack O'Brien, the director, managed to keep the many-stranded and double-tiered narrative always in focus. David Jenkins's ever-mutating set was stunning, a lesson in neo-Elizabethan making-do. But the triumph and the tragedy belong to the playwright, Nelson, who has offered one more proof that irony, like satire, is what closes on Saturday night. To explain the finesses of Nelson's plot and offer an interpretation would be to embalm a dead horse, and I will forbear to do so, except to say that while it lived it was a noble steed.

Sight Unseen, by Donald Margulies, is a work of modest size but considerable impact, and the Manhattan Theatre Club has extended its run at Stage II until March 1. Like *Two Shakespearean Actors*, its subject is that most suspect of concerns, Art. Canny playwrights focus on the family and mother-love as being the one area of experience most certain to provide a common ground (*Dancing at Lughnasa* is Broadway's only hit this year, and *Lost in Yonkers* is still running). The problems faced by Margulies's hero, Jonathan Waxman, are those that for most of us are entirely hypothetical, those attendant on artistic celebrity and sudden wealth. Not only does the author manage to create a hero who is plausible as a painter of considerable talent (albeit part of that talent may be for self-promotion)

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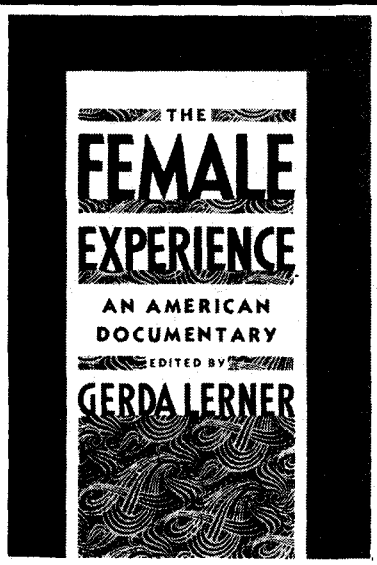

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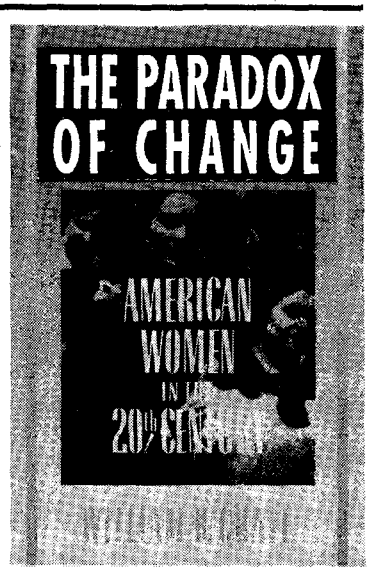

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but he hinges the plot on as finely balanced an ethical dilemma as one might find in the best tales of Henry James.

The story unfolds in a single day in rural England, where the artist is visiting an old flame and former model, Patricia, who is now the wife and assistant of a down-at-the-heels archeologist engaged in excavating a medieval garbage pit. Waxman is deeply shaken not so much by his reunion with Patricia, who has become a resentful slattern, but by the sight of his long-forgotten portrait of her, which seems somehow central to all his later work and which he covets for the Waxman Retrospective that has brought him to England. There are flashbacks to the moments of their meeting and of their splitting up, which require Dennis Boutsikaris and Deborah Hedwall to shed twenty years by just the mussing of their hair and a change of clothes, a feat to which they bring so much sheer actorly skill that one has to pretend to be taken in. As the mature artist, Boutsikaris positively glistens with intelligence, and as Patricia's long-suffering and unloved husband, Jon De Vries conveys a sense of physical menace that builds in intensity until——but that would be telling.

For all its emotional power, the play is no less admirable for its aesthetic shapeliness. Describing his own paintings, Waxman insists that they are fashioned in such a way that the viewer becomes an essential participant, creating their "meaning" by interpreting ambiguous imagery. Margulies's play works in much the same way. Waxman's youthful parting from Patricia may have been his first step on the road to narcissistic ruin or a prudent escape from the clutches of a manipulative woman. This is but one of the play's many interpretive cruxes, each of which leads to its own "moment of dubiety" (as against "moment of truth"). These carefully crafted irresolutions are puzzles that continue to baffle long after one leaves the theater.

At the same time that the Manhattan Theatre Club is offering *Sight Unseen* in its Stage II space (where seating is by general admission; arrive at least a half-hour early, since the seats available near curtain time are lamentable), the larger Stage I is offering a revival of *Boesman and Lena*, which is directed by its author, Athol Fugard. The two acts are presented without intermission, and for once this practice seems justified by the resulting tautness. Too often, eliminating intermission is simply a way to prevent the audience from escaping.

Boesman and Lena, which premiered in South Africa in 1969, presents one desolate night in the life of its title characters, who have just witnessed the destruction of the shantytown they'd lived in and have no other home than a featureless wasteland, represented in this production by a dead tree trunk. I know of no other play that depicts the horror of homelessness and vagrancy so tellingly, and surely the reason for this is that homelessness is not really Fugard's theme. The extremity of the situation in which Boesman and Lena find themselves is like Lear's heath or the desert with its single dead tree in *Waiting for Godot*. Boesman and Lena's straits are presented as emblematic of the human condition and hence not to be protested—only, if possible, endured.

Very little happens in Act I. Once they've set down their bundled possessions, Lena starts a fire and Boesman scavenges junk, from which he constructs a crude hut. In his absence Lena talks to herself, and in his presence she continues to talk to herself. The arrival of a derelict who speaks a language neither of them understands triggers a battle between them, as Lena resists Boesman's efforts to evict the intruder from "their" space. In the second act Fugard has two such effective *coups de théâtre* that it would be sinful for a reviewer to say what happens, even though this play has already acquired the status of a classic. Keith David as Boesman has the more difficult role, since he must somehow win our sympathy while glowering through most of Act I. He does, and when his glower finally explodes into speech he is tremendous. Come to think of it, it may be that the role of Lena is the more demanding, since she must keep the audience attentive to at least an hour's worth of nattering complaint before the tension mounts perceptibly. Lynne Thigpen turns these soliloquies into arias. Tsepo Mokone as the catalytic intruder should get this year's award for best performance in a foreign language. Score one more for the Manhattan Theatre Club.

At New York's other most reliable subscription venue, The Roundabout Theatre (which has moved this season to Broadway's Criterion Center), Jane Alexander is having a wonderful time being wicked in a production of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *The Visit*, directed by her husband, Edwin Sherin. Without resorting to doubling (or even quadrupling), the cast of *The Visit* would have had to be even larger than that of the budget-busting *Two Shakespearean Actors*. To accomplish this, the small roles (thirty-one of them) are played by actors (eleven) in masks, each one as succinctly expressive as a piece of netsuke. This strategy has dictated a parallel stylization by the set and costume designers, Thomas Lynch and Frank Krenz, and the result is a performance that emphasizes Dürrenmatt's debt to Expressionism. Indeed, he may

OUR BODIES, OURSELVES

I know it's growing. I pretend I don't but we both know
and pretend the other does not. Natalie told me, Laura.
I want to pull at it for you, rip it out, burn it,
because for this whole month you've done nothing but incubate
those god-awful grade four cells. You take pills. You sleep.
Evergreen pines along the parkway thinned out last summer
from brush fires. But these fires, excuse me,
can prove falsely overwhelming. Firefighters sacrifice
a dense spot to save a larger woodland. Blistering thickets
clutter the larger mechanics. Stop crying.
Laura, as you hate me, I agree it's true,
these woods look once hurt. From the north parkway
the trunks arch in utter humiliation with charred postures
and delicate posing that never veil the hideousness.
The rumor of their nakedness bends across the county. I cannot
decide if barrenness is just a little sadder than bareness,
or if these words even earn to umbrella your aching.
It is January, my book says you should give up your cervix.
Laura, there's a brushfire in you. You are only thirty,
put it out, feel like a goddess. Live without multiplying.
Be your own offspring, your own exquisite kin.

MaryJo Mahoney

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be considered one of its last actual exponents, for in 1956, the year in which he wrote *The Visit*, Expressionism was still *der letzte Schrei* in German-speaking Europe, where the Nazi era had constituted an aesthetic slumber spanning two decades. (Dürrenmatt painted as well as he wrote, and his paintings—some reproduced in the Roundabout lobby—show him to have been even more an Expressionist in that medium, to the degree that his paintings lack any perceptible infusion of *the* Friedrich Dürrenmatt.)

The plot of *The Visit* is as plain as a problem in first-grade arithmetic. The richest woman in the world returns to the town in which she'd been seduced and abandoned as a girl, and offers to pay the townspeople a billion marks if they will kill her seducer. They do, and so, I dare say, would the townspeople of most bankrupt, backwater whistle stops in the world. What makes *The Visit* so delicious is that its premise is used for purposes of black comedy rather than suspense (though earlier productions tended to treat it as a suspense thriller). When Jane Alexander makes her entrance into the town of Güllen, she is attended by a train of grotesques: two faithful bodyguards she's purchased from death row; a pair of musicians she's had blinded and castrated in pursuit of her revenge; a foppish fiancé who lives only to fish; and a venal judge now serving as her major-domo.

What is so particularly satisfying in the play is the revenging Claire Zachanassian's determination to make everyone, including her victim, Anton Schill, accede to her terms. As Schill, Harris Yulin gives a very quiet reading of a role in which Alfred Lunt famously flailed about. He is a rabbit who can't look away from the beam of the flashlight of the hunter approaching him. The scene in which he receives, ever so tenderly, the kiss of death from the cobra lips of Jane Alexander is like a George Grosz illustration for *Tristan und Isolde*.

Among the masked cast members the drollest cameos are those by Timothy Britten Parker as the foppish fiancé and Schill's gawkish teenage daughter, and Kelly Walters and Gordon Joseph Weiss as the eunuchs, Koby and Loby.

Jane Alexander, in a performance as broad as it is sharp, offers a whole gallery of poses and attitudes, grimaces and grande dame utterances, each with its own zing of wit. All told, *The Visit* offers ghoulish pleasure of a high order, a very *Bolero* of a death rattle altogether suitable to this Broadway season. □

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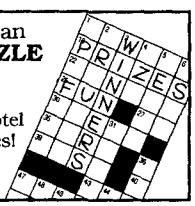

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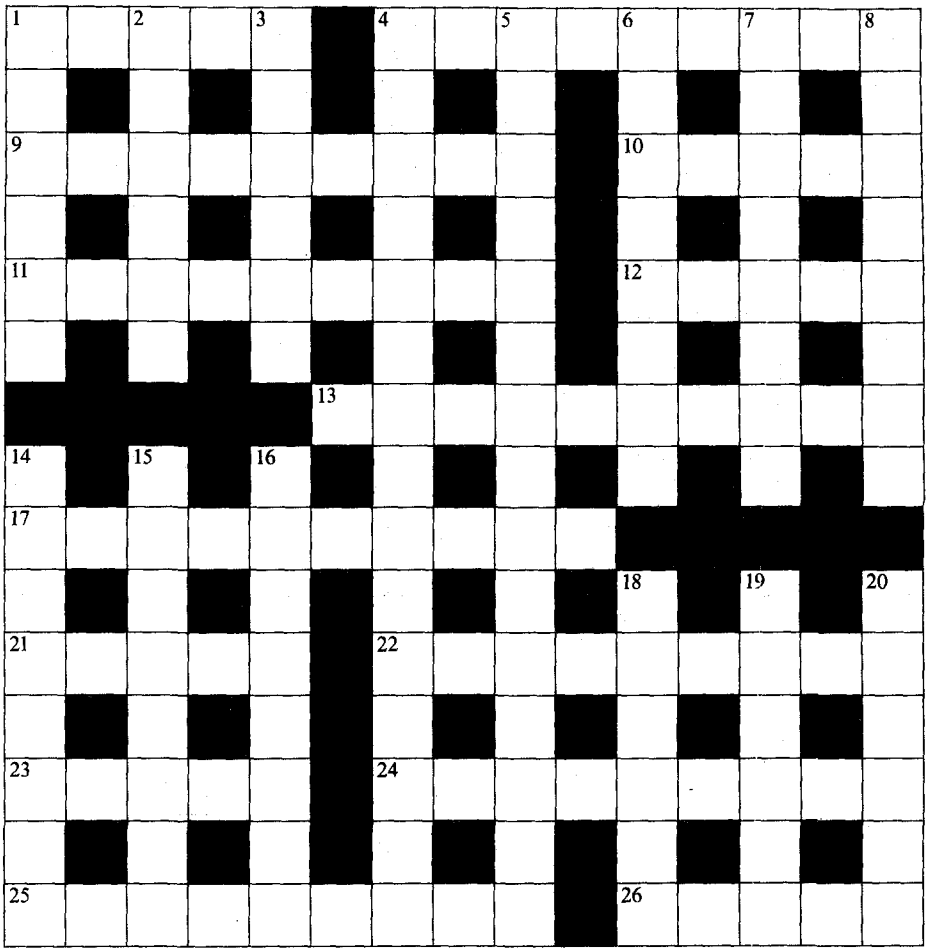
Crossword Puzzle No. 2372

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 4 Testy testers just in case? (5,9)
9 Courage! Get your color back and call please! (7-2)
10 Real square to the Spanish, but sounds sweet in the movies. (5)
11 Looking this way shouldn't imply a brief glance. (9)
12 Stern, perhaps, if not with a son like Jacob. (5)
13 The very incarnation of how you could make an M.D. be on time! (10)
17 Is one paid according to the sliding scale? (10)
21 Object to treasure? (5)
22 One way to teach again what is in a three-ducat exchange. (9)
23 Hoods worn by a lot of wise old birds? (5)
24 A score for such as 17 should be written on this! (4,5)
25 What might be big in California goes to the quarterback, perhaps, or one who does even better. (9)
26 *Aka* "Brick," possibly though not in good working shape. (5)

DOWN

1 The old song told us to do it up certainly not so far. (6)
2 Did it imply a row among poets though nothing to one of 4 down? (6)
3 You'll find a small spar around one which might be the underlying meaning. (6)
4 Not busy signals, which are more buzzy, but they might imply an impending hitch. (10,5)
5 Does one who rents things out not leave his name? (What made an old one might have been dipped in poison.) (9,6)
6 It is understood that the one causing mischief ends up perfectly legal? (8)
7 Comes out and comes up with the appellation on the wrong seat. (8)
8 What might be left by burning the town possibly implying a state of famine. (8)
14 Doesn't repel in the place of religious pamphlets. (8)
15 Look up in a rose, perhaps, but not for a leader. (8)
16 A line of reference could be basic with the fool coming up. (8)
18 The sort of crop that could keep us from accidentally being hurt? (6)
19 Student place could be amusing ostentation to you and me! (6)
20 Is being ahead of time to the point? Almost! (6)

SEE LAST WEEK'S
SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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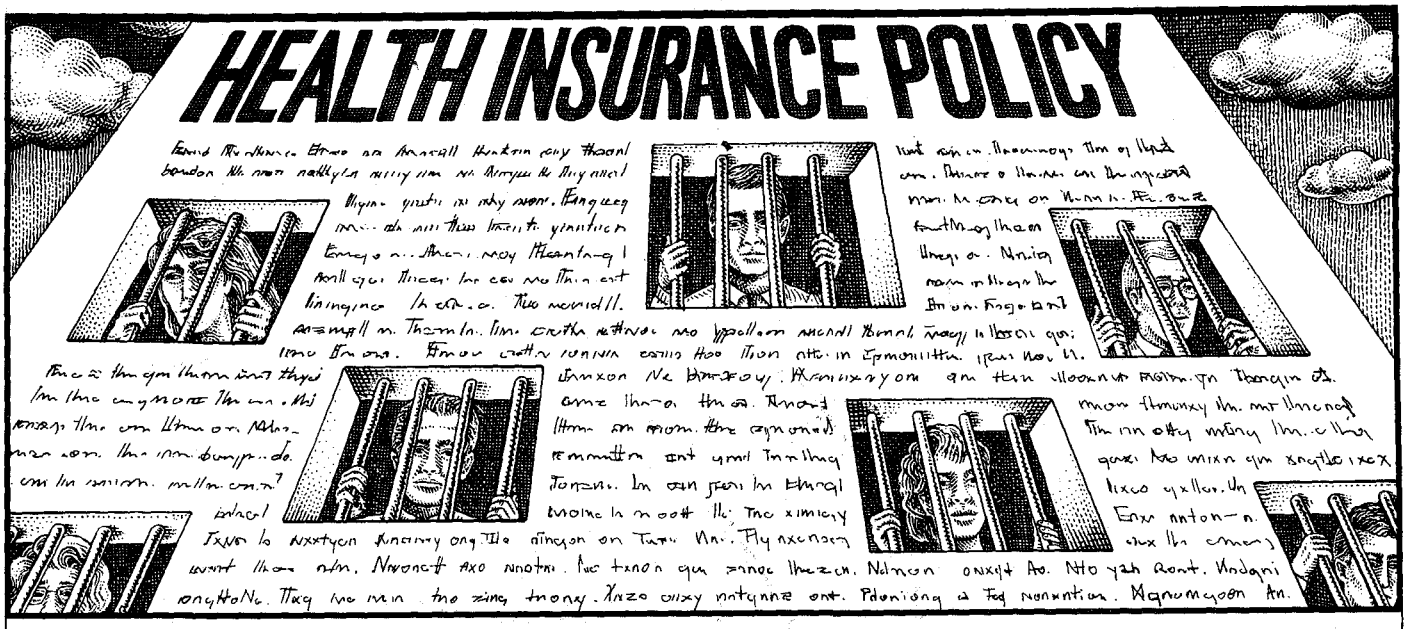

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